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Marxian Value Theory

PAUL M. SWEEZY

Cabral on the African Revolution

BASIL DAVIDSON

On "Leftist Juntas"

BEFEKADU ZEGEYE

Special 96-page issue

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

We are honored to announce that MR has received an anonymous gift of $500 to make possible an essay contest in memory of Michael Magdoff who died in 1959 and would have been 40 years old this July 19th. Coming to maturity in the bleak political-ideological climate of the 1950s, Michael was a passionate defender of civil liberties and a dedicated partisan of socialism. Designed to reflect these concerns, the focus of the essays should be on the possibilities and strategies for developing a socialist consciousness in the U.S. working class. We are particularly eager for writers to draw on their own experiences in working-class contexts such as trade unions, neighborhood organizations, political caucuses (women, blacks, Third World people), consumer or environmental protection groups, and the like. Essays should be 5,000 words or less (none over this limit will be considered) and can be by individuals or groups. Entries by young workers and activists will be especially welcome. The deadline is May 15, 1980. The $500 prize money will be awarded by a jury to be announced later, and any essay or essays accepted for publication in MR will be paid the usual fee for

(*Continued on inside back cover*)

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MARXIAN VALUE THEORY AND CRISES

BY PAUL M. SWEEZY

This is a somewhat extended and edited version of a paper presented at a three-day colloquium on the general subject of "Value Theory and Contemporary Capitalism" which took place in London in November 1978 under the joint auspices of the *New Left Review*, the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, and the Conference of Socialist Economists, which publishes the journal *Capital and Class*. At the center of many of the discussions were the ideas set forth in the recent book by Ian Steedman, *Marx After Sraffa* (London: New Left Books, 1978). Steedman was also one of the principal speakers and an active participant in the discussions at the colloquium.—P.M.S.

There is, in my opinion, no direct connection between value theory and crises, nor between the kind of price theory some wish to substitute for value theory and crises. Crises (in the broad sense that Marxists ordinarily use the term) are enormously complicated phenomena, and they differ from one another so much that no general theory, and still less no simple theory, can hope to provide more than the beginning of a serious analysis of any given crisis situation. Nevertheless, I think it is true that crises cannot be understood properly unless they are envisaged as integral to an overall conception of the nature and functioning of the capitalist accumulation process, and I for one find the theory of value to be the only basis on which such a conception can be built.

Perhaps I should say that I find it the only basis presently available on which such a conception can be built. I am aware that those, like Ian Steedman, who want to throw out the theory of value altogether but who nevertheless concede that it provided the approach which enabled Marx to arrive at his understand-

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ing of the accumulation process still do not think that value theory is in any way essential to this achievement. You can, they say, substitute price theory à la Sraffa without precluding any further inquiries along Marxian lines you may care to undertake. To quote Steedman (the concluding sentence in his recent book *Marx after Sraffa*): "It can scarcely be overemphasized that the project of providing a materialist account of capitalist societies is dependent on Marx's value magnitude analysis *only* in the negative sense that continued adherence to the latter is a major fetter on the development of the former."*

It has occurred to me that by speaking of Marx's "value *magnitude* analysis," Steedman may be implying that there is another kind of value analysis, a *qualitative* value analysis, concerned with social relations rather than economic magnitudes, which helps instead of hindering "the project of providing a materialist account of capitalist societies." If so, I entirely agree with him. Only I happen to believe that the marriage of the qualitative and quantitative analyses was one of Marx's greatest achievements and that separating them runs the danger, as in the case of separating Siamese twins, of killing them both.

In many years of writing and teaching (which also ought not be separated), I have found this a position difficult, and all too often impossible, to explain. Those brought up in capitalist society are as a rule totally accustomed to the increasingly elaborate division of labor which it fosters and which is reflected in a corresponding division of knowledge and the professional specializations which deal in knowledge. Against this background, it is only natural to take for granted that theoretical systems can be taken to pieces, with some parts being retained and others rejected, more or less as diners confronted

* I should add that I doubt that Sraffa would endorse this view. Steedman himself points out that "Sraffa's *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities* presents *no* criticisms of Marx": it was, in other words, what its subtitle proclaims, "A Prelude to a Critique of Economic Theory," economic theory of course meaning neoclassical orthodoxy. And Joan Robinson who is as down on value theory as Steedman and puts her own interpretation on Sraffa's work warns against attributing her view to Sraffa: "Piero," she says, "has always stuck close to pure unadulterated Marx and regards my amendments with suspicion." ("The Labor Theory of Value," MONTHLY REVIEW [December 1977], p. 56n)

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with a smorgasbord take the dishes that appeal to them and bypass the others. Anyone who thinks in this way has little hesitation in disassembling Marx's analysis of capitalism and holding onto or discarding constituent components according to his or her particular tastes. It doesn't occur to such a person that the theoretical system may be more like a machine or an organism which needs all its parts to function.

But analogies can be no more than suggestive. Let me try to make my point more directly. Roughly the first two parts of the first volume of *Capital* plus most of the first three chapters of the third part (amounting in all to about one quarter of the volume as a whole) are predominantly qualitative in the sense indicated, i.e., they focus on identifying and clarifying the basic relations of commodity-producing societies in general and capitalism in particular. Thereafter—and this holds in the main for the second and third volumes as well—there is a heavier emphasis on quantifying these relationships or rather the economic variables and their interconnections which express these relationships. Throughout, reasoning is in terms of value theory, and there is no effort to make an explicit distinction between the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of value. For Marx the quantitative is saturated with the qualitative, and the qualitative is expressed through the quantitative.

The beauty of this approach, as I see it, is that it enables us to achieve a clear and coherent vision of capitalism *as an historical process*. The early history of capitalism is seen not (or not only) as a chaos of rapine and violence but as the process through which the distinctively capitalist mode of production came into the world, with the capital/labor relation replacing the lord/serf relation as the central relation of exploitation in a new form of class society. Every class society is characterized by the necessary/surplus labor dichotomy, hence by an implicit rate of exploitation, but only in capitalism does this take the value form, with the rate of exploitation expressing itself as a rate of surplus value. This, and *not* the rate of profit (as Steedman *et al* seem to believe), is the crucial variable which enables Marx to get a firm handle on the history of capitalism. By dividing surplus value into absolute surplus value and relative surplus value (neither of which would make sense

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without the concept of a *rate* of surplus value), Marx was abl to lay bare the anatomy of the class struggles which were en demic to capitalism from its earliest beginnings. This task wa carried through in the third and fourth parts of the first volum of *Capital*, and especially in the incomparable chapter 15 on "Machinery and Modern Industry."*

From there, using the results already achieved, Marx went on to analyze the accumulation process, showing among other things: (1) how the mechanism for adjusting the rate of wages to the value of labor power is radically different from that which adjusts the price of any other commodity to its value, with the reserve army of labor (or relative surplus population) playing the key role of "pivot upon which the law of demand and supply of labor works"**; (2) how the normal outcome of capitalist accumulation must be a polarization between riches and poverty; (3) why the form of the accumulation process must be one of cyclical ups and downs rather than a linear progression; and (4) the manner in which competition of capitals must lead, via concentration and centralization, to its own transformation into monopoly.

Have I made my point now, i.e., that it was through

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* How solidly Marx established the framework for his analysis is shown by the way Harry Braverman could use it without essential modification more than a hundred years later, in *Labor and Monopoly Capital,* to bring the story up to date.

** This mechanism, not to mention its enormous implications for the functioning of capitalism, necessarily escapes the attention of those who, like Steedman, confine their attention to economies which are "fully developed, capitalist commodity economies, in which *all* [emphasis added] production activities are organized and controlled by capitalists (or their agents)." (*op. cit.*, p. 16) This just happens *not* to be true of capitalism in the real world where production of by far the most important single commodity, labor power, is *not* organized or controlled by capitalists. Much that is most distinctive and valuable in Marx's analysis of capitalism stems from the fact that he never for one moment lost sight of this crucial difference between labor power and other commodities. Let me add, though this is not the place to elaborate on the matter, that, if account is taken of this special characteristic of labor power, it involves a total misconception of Marx's theory to write, as Steedman does: "Wages are treated in this work, as they were by Marx, as being exogenously determined . . . in a given economy in a given period." (*op. cit.*, p. 20) It could be argued, to my mind unpersuasively, that Marx treated *the value of labor power* as exogenously determined, but never wages.

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marrying qualitative with quantitative value theory that Marx was able to illuminate the history of capitalism in a way that no theorist before or after him has been able to hold a candle to? If not, perhaps it will help to quote Schumpeter who was a severe critic of Marx but at the same time understood what Marx was trying to do better than most of those who consider themselves to be Marxists. The following passage from Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (p. 44), if I interpret it correctly, says about Marx's achievement pretty much what I have been trying to express but does so in very different language:

> There is . . . one thing of fundamental importance for the methodology of economics which he [Marx] actually achieved. Economists have always either themselves done work in economic history or else used the historical work of others. But the facts of economic history were assigned to a separate compartment. They entered theory, if at all, merely in the role of illustrations, or possibly of verifications of results. They mixed with it only mechanically. Now Marx's mixture is a chemical one; that is to say, he introduced them into the very argument that produces the results. He was the first economist of top rank to see and to teach systematically how economic theory may be turned into historical analysis and how the historical narrative may be turned into *histoire raisonnée*.

Schumpeter could hardly have been expected to agree that value theory was the key to Marx's success in this enterprise, but it is difficult to see how he or anyone else could deny that it guided Marx every step of the way. And it would be equally difficult to make out a case that any theorist since Marx, dispensing with the theory of value, has had a success comparable to his.* Nor do I think it at all likely that anyone following the

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* Schumpeter himself might be put forward as a candidate for the honor, and his own conception of the scope of his theoretical endeavor would at least give the nomination a certain plausibility. But, as I have argued elsewhere (*Modern Capitalism and Other Essays* [Monthly Review Press: 1972], pp. 140-141), history has not dealt kindly with Schumpeter's theory of capitalist development in the more than half a century since it was first formulated; and of course as far as Marxists are concerned the absence of any theory of class antagonism or class struggle from Schumpeter's version of *histoire raisonnée* renders it largely irrelevant. On this, see my note "Schumpeter's Theory of Innovation" in *The Present as History* (Monthly Review Press: 1953), pp. 274-282.

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advice of Ian Steedman, Joan Robinson, and others to chuc the theory of value in favor of a Sraffa-type theory of price will make any significant contribution to the solution of Marx' "problematic."

Here we meet what I suppose would be the ultimate ob jection of these critics of value theory. Economic magnitude in the real world, as Marx was of course well aware, are ex pressed in terms of prices of production, not values. From a Marxist standpoint this, in and of itself, is not a weakness or flaw in the theory, rather the contrary. Reality is made up of appearance *and* essence. Prices of production belong to the realm of appearance, values to the realm of essence. Unless we can move back and forth between them as needed, we can never achieve more than a quite superficial understanding of capitalism. *But*, say the critics, you *cannot* move back and forth between the two realms except under very special assumptions; and if these assumptions are dropped, seriously misleading distortions result.

This at any rate is the way I interpret Steedman's argument which is summed up in a diagram on page 48 of *Marx after Sraffa*. The diagram has a box on its left-hand side labeled "Physical production and wage data." From this an arrow (a) in the northeasterly direction connects to a box labeled "All value quantities," and another arrow (b) in the southeasterly direction to another box labeled "Profits and prices."* Between the value box and the price box there is a dotted and interrupted arrow (c). Steedman comments: "The dashed and 'blocked off' arrow (c) represents the fact that one cannot, in general, explain prices and profits from value quantities as set out in the general value schema. . . . We thus have to picture our theoretical structure as having a 'fork-like' character, with a value prong, arrow (a), and a 'profit-price' prong, arrow (b). *There is*, in general, *no way from one prong to the other.*" (p. 49) This, unless I have misunderstood Steedman, is his entire reason for wanting to jettison what he calls value magnitude analysis.

My answer is essentially simple, though it could undoubtedly be elaborated at considerable length. Despite what Steedman

* By "prices" Steedman means what Marx called "prices of production"; neither is concerned with market prices.

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says, there *are* general ways of getting from the value prong to the price-profit prong. This of course is what is known in the Marxist literature as the transformation problem. As is by now well known, the way proposed by Marx himself is faulty (Steedman spends more space on this than he needs to, in view of the large amount that has been written on the subject in recent years). But there are other ways which are logically impeccable. One is the Bortkiewicz solution of which there are a number of variants and refinements; and another is what may be called the iterative solution, presented most fully by Anwar Shaikh.* It is true that in general a logically satisfactory solution to the transformation problem yields results different in certain respects from those of Marx's faulty method. Total price does not equal total value, and the rate of profit in the price scheme is not equal to the rate of profit in the value scheme. But there is no reason to think that these differences have any special bearing on the structure and functioning of the capitalist economy, from which it follows that analyzing the accumulation process on the basis of values (see p. 5 above) yields results which do not need to be altered in any significant way by shifting to prices.

Aha, you may say, if this is true, then why do we need the value analysis at all? Reality presents itself in terms of prices. If it can also be analyzed in terms of prices, why bother with those alleged value "essences" and the whole rigamarole of transforming them into prices? But wait a minute! I did *not* say that reality could be analyzed in terms of prices: I said that the results of the analysis would not be significantly altered by shifting to prices. I do not believe that the analysis could (or would) have been made in terms of prices. And the reason is that the key concept and variable in the analysis, the center of gravity which holds everything else in place, is the rate of surplus

* "Marx's Theory of Value and the 'Transformation Problem,'" in Jesse Schwartz, ed., *The Subtle Anatomy of Capitalism* (Santa Monica, California, 1977). For the record I should like to state that an arithmetical version of the iterative solution was put forward in an unpublished manuscript many years ago by my late friend Harmon Alexander, who at the time was a screen writer and only later, in his fifties, acquired a formal training in economics.

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value, *and it is precisely the rate of surplus value which disappears, vanishes without a trace, from an analysis made in terms of prices.**

I would like to stress here, though it is not possible to develop the point within the limits of this paper, that in comparison with the rate of surplus value the rate of profit is both a secondary concept and one which, taken by itself, tends strongly to foster fetishistic thinking. The notion that the rate of profit is somehow, and unlike the rate of surplus value, an "operational" concept in terms of which capitalists make decisions is without foundation. Capitalists do not know what the average rate of profit is, and each one makes decisions on the basis of his own rate of profit which is rarely, and then only by accident, equal to the average rate. (This is of course even more true when we abandon the competitive assumptions which make the average rate the norm around which individual rates tend to fluctuate.) And the fact that the rate of profit states a relationship between profit and total capital rather than between profit and variable capital all too easily—as shown by the entire history of bourgeois economic thought—gives rise to the theory of the productivity of capital, an example *par excellence* of fetishistic thought.

II

Crises must of course be analyzed within the framework of a theory of the accumulation process, and in this restricted sense value theory is essential to the analysis of crises. An understanding of the accumulation process tells us why crises are possible and even inevitable. But a great deal more is involved, and if we are to understand particular crises we have to take account of much which does not figure in value theory. Here I want to focus on two factors which I believe play a specially important role in the crises which characterize the present phase

* I did not understand this when I was writing *The Theory of Capitalist Development* some four decades ago. As a result the fifth and sixth sections of the chapter on the transformation problem (entitled respectively "The Significance of Price Calculation" and "Why Not Start with Price Calculation?"), while not wrong, do not reach the heart of the matter, which is the crucial role of the rate of surplus value in the entire Marxian theory of capitalism.

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of capitalist development, including the one which the capitalist world is currently undergoing. These are (1) monopoly (using the term to include oligopoly), and (2) finance (money and debt). I shall limit myself to the briefest possible outline.

As pointed out above (p. 5), the competition of capitals leads, via the twin phenomena of concentration and centralization (both inseparable aspects of the accumulation process), to the replacement of free competition by various forms of monopoly. This in turn means that the mechanism whereby an average rate of profit is formed ceases to operate in the assumed way, and without an average rate of profit there is no longer any reason to assume an orderly correspondence between values and prices of production. If we start from a situation (competitive capitalism) in which economic reality presents itself in terms of prices of production, we now have a situation (monopoly capitalism), in which this role is played by monopoly prices. These are transformed prices of production in exactly the same sense that prices of production are transformed values.* There is, however, this difference, that there are no general rules for relating monopoly prices to prices of production as there were for relating prices of production to values. About all we can say is that monopoly prices in various industries tend to be higher than prices of production in proportion to the difficulties new capitals have in entering those industries. And of course a corresponding hierarchy of profit rates will emerge, highest in the industries most difficult to enter, lowest in those where entry is free (as is assumed to be the case under competitive capitalism). An average rate of profit still exists in a mathematical sense, but it is not one which tends to impose itself on individual capitals and it does not govern the distribution of surplus value throughout the system as the average rate of profit does under competitive conditions.

* It follows of course that monopoly prices are *also* transformed values. Hence analyzing monopoly prices does not imply repudiating the theory of value (as some critics of Paul Baran's and my *Monopoly Capital* have alleged). But, as argued in *Monopoly Capital* and also below, shifting from value to monopoly price does have important consequences for the accumulation process, which is not true of shifting from value to price of production.

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I have long been arguing, beginning with *The Theory of Capitalist Development* and on various occasions since,* that the transition from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism has a profound effect on the accumulation process. The redistribution of surplus value in favor of large monopolistic units of capital and to the disadvantage of small competitive units greatly enhances the system's accumulation potential. At the same time, however, attractive outlets for capital investment are curtailed. To put it another way, the big monopolies tend to be very profitable and hence able to accumulate rapidly; but at the same time they are afraid of spoiling their own markets by overinvesting, so they go slow in expanding their productive capacity. To protect their monopolistic positions they erect what barriers they can against outsiders invading their markets (one of the most effective ways is to maintain a considerable margin of unused capacity which can be quickly activated in retaliation against unwanted newcomers). Such typical monopolistic behavior adds up to a recipe for much slower growth than the economy would be capable of, and slow growth relative to the economy's potential is another name for stagnation, precisely the situation in which the global capitalist system now finds itself.

The implication of this line of reasoning is that in a developed monopoly-capitalist economy (and especially one in which the process of monopolization is continuing or even accelerating as it has been in the United States and Western Europe throughout the present century), stagnation—slow growth, heavy unemployment, much idle productive capacity—must be regarded as the norm, not the exception. Hence what needs to be explained is *not* stagnation but extended periods of buoyancy and rapid expansion such as we in the West have been living through since the Second World War.

This is the problem which Paul Baran and I posed and attempted to explore in *Monopoly Capital*. Clearly it requires that attention be directed not only to the internal logic of the

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* See, e.g., *The Theory of Capitalist Development*. (1942) chap. XV; *Modern Capitalism and Other Essays*, pp. 39-42; "Some Problems in the Theory of Capital Accumulation," MONTHLY REVIEW (May 1974), pp. 40-42.

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accumulation process—a logic which cannot but be abstract in the sense of focusing on a small number of variables—but also to the overall historical environment within which the accumulation process unfolds. In interpreting the development of U.S. capitalism over the past century, Baran and I attributed decisive importance to "epoch-making innovations" (the railroad and the automobile) on the one hand and major wars and their aftermaths on the other. The great railroad boom of the second half of the nineteenth century, we argued, came to an abrupt end with the panic of 1907. Incipient stagnation characterized the period from then until 1914 when the First World War took over, followed by its aftermath boom and the automobile-led prosperity of the 1920s. Stagnation, unmitigated by further shocks or stimuli, set in with the cyclical downswing of 1929-1933 and lasted throughout the decade of the 1930s. This was interrupted by the Second World War which was duly followed by a reconversion and reconstruction boom.

After that, however, and largely as a consequence of the vast changes in the structure and organization of world capitalism brought about by the war, the historical determinants of the course taken by the accumulation process were transformed in important respects. There was never any doubt that the internal logic of the monopoly capitalist system was functioning in what had long since become the normal fashion, but the environment within which this logic worked its way was new and enormously complicated. Baran and I did not attempt to analyze this new pattern of interaction in any detail, and the few comments we devoted to it (*Monopoly Capital*, pp. 244-248) were unsystematic and impressionistic.*

It is of course not my intention to try to repair this omission here. I want only to mention what we can now see in retrospect were some of the major factors, and to stress one, the huge growth of debt, which I think has been unduly neglected. It is just at this time precipitating what I have

* This was at least partly because *Monopoly Capital* was conceived and largely written in the early stages of the postwar prosperity and, as noted, "it is still not possible to say when the whole movement will lose its momentum." (p. 245) In the event the momentum was sustained for more than a decade after this was written.

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elsewhere called a "crisis within the crisis"*; and needs to be integrated into the theory of the accumulation process in a way which, so far as I am aware, has not yet even been attempted.

By far the most important postwar development was the imposition of American hegemony on the capitalist world: for the first time since the decline of British hegemony in the late nineteenth century, the international capitalist system came under the dominant leadership of a single great power. This had, among other things, the following consequences: (1) the establishment of a new international monetary system based on the gold-linked dollar which now served as standard of value, reserve currency, and international means of payment; (2) the extensive dismantlement of old empires and of the trading and currency blocs which had grown up in the interwar period, with a resultant vast growth of world markets, including the capital market and (to a lesser but still important extent) the market for labor power; (3) the build-up in the United States of a military machine of historically unprecedented proportions which had the dual function of policing the world capitalist system and facing up to the military power of the "socialist" bloc under the hegemony (until the Sino-Soviet split) of the USSR. In discharging its global responsibilities the United States was involved in fighting two major regional wars—in Korea and Vietnam—and many lesser armed confrontations.

In this new historical environment capitalism experienced a secular boom comparable to, and in many respects exceeding, anything in its earlier history. The accumulation of capital on a world scale was released from paralyzing restrictions which had grown up during and as a result of the Great Depression of the 1930s. The United States, benefiting from its hegemonic position and with its economy continuously stimulated by enormous military budgets, acted as a dynamo standing at the center of the system as a whole and driving it inexorably onward and upward. As always happens in such a period but now more than ever, capitalists became infected with a spirit of optimism which was reinforced and provided with a seemingly scientific foundation by various brands of "new economics" purporting to

* MONTHLY REVIEW (December 1978).

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prove that panics and depressions were a thing of the past and that ahead lay endless expansion punctuated only by minor setbacks and recessions. In this heady atmosphere, there seemed to be few limits to the amount of capital investment which could be profitably undertaken, the only question being whether the payoff would begin next year or a few years later. Under these conditions the exigencies of competition dictated action now, and the combined action of all the competitors created mutual markets for their products which appeared to be self-sustaining, and hence to guarantee against the old disease of overproduction.

What was really happening of course was what had happened innumerable times in the past: behind the illusion of self-sustaining growth was the process of building up excess capacity. What brought the true situation to light was the cyclical downturn of 1974, coinciding with sharply increased oil prices following the Yom Kippur war of 1973. Suddenly the economic climate changed: excess capacity showed up in industry after industry—steel, automobiles, shipbuilding, textiles, heavy chemicals, and many more; capital accumulation faltered; unemployment grew beyond anything known in the postwar period; the rate of growth of industrial production fell below the postwar average and remained there even during the ensuing cyclical upswing. A new period of stagnation, reminiscent of the 1930s, had apparently arrived.

There was, however, one highly significant exception to this pattern, the United States itself. There the cyclical upswing began early in 1975. By the end of 1976 the growth rate of industrial production was back up to the postwar average, and it has remained above the average ever since. At the same time the unemployment rate, which had reached 8.5 percent of the labor force in 1975, has steadily declined to 6 percent at the time of writing (November 1978).*

* It should be obvious that this performance of the U.S. economy, so much stronger than that of the other advanced capitalist countries, has acted to keep the latter from faltering even more dramatically than has been the case. Without a relatively vigorous U.S. recovery, the world capitalist system would have been in considerably worse shape than it actually is.

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Why this exception? The answer is clear: the expansion of the U.S. economy has been fueled by a veritable explosion of public and private debt. To quote the most prestigious journal of American business and finance: "Since late 1975 the U.S. has created a new debt economy, a credit explosion so wild and so eccentric that it dwarfs even the borrowing binge of the early 1970s." (*Business Week,* October 16, 1978) The crux of this phenomenon has been the growth of consumer debt which both causes and reflects the leading role of consumption in the current recovery (contrary to the usual pattern of investment-led recovery). Also important has been the persistence of federal government deficits (almost $50 billion in 1978) into the fourth year of a cyclical recovery, a quite unprecedented occurrence.

But it is not only at the national level that the financial sector has played a crucial part in the recent behavior of the capitalist system. Thanks to its hegemonic role, the United States was able to supply the liquidity requirements of a rapidly expanding world capitalist economy through running a persistent deficit in its balance of payments. The dollars thus injected into the central banks and monetary systems of other countries served for more than a decade to lubricate the global mechanisms of trade and finance while conferring on the United States itself a seemingly limitless power to command the resources and control the destinies of the subordinate units in the world system. This continuing deficit in the U.S. balance of payments was also the main source of what came to be known as Eurodollars, a form of transnational money not under the control of any central bank or governmental authority. Eurodollars in turn became the basis of a credit expansion which added many billions to the pool of dollars outside the United States. It is symptomatic of the uncontrolled (and unprecedented) nature of this phenomenon that no one knows how large this pool is, though it certainly runs into hundreds of billions and some estimates have been as high as $600 billion.

Borrowers from this vast pool of money have included not only corporations and financial institutions but also governments all over the world. To quote again the *Business Week* report cited above: "It is that massive flow of funds from the inter-

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national market that is enabling nations to keep rolling over old debt and taking on new debt nearly without limit. In just four years, the industrialized countries of the world have doubled their Euromarket debt, the less developed countries that do not export oil have tripled their Euromarket debt, and now even many of the OPEC nations themselves are borrowing on so vast a scale that they will owe nearly $10 billion by the end of this year, compared with a mere $990 million in 1974."

This enormous expansion of debt, on both the national and international levels, has of course had the effect of cushioning the impact of the sharp downturn of 1974: without it there can be little doubt that the end of the secular postwar boom would have been the beginning of a depression at least comparable to that of the early 1930s.

Stressing the role of debt expansion in the recovery from the recession of 1974-1975 is necessary, but it could also be misleading if it were taken to imply that we are dealing here with a factor which has become important to the functioning of capitalism only in recent years. The truth is, as Marx himself observed many times and in many contexts, that debt (or credit which is the same thing looked at from the other side) has been crucial to capitalism since earliest times. The growth of long-distance trade is scarcely imaginable without a developed credit system; the public debt acted as a lever of primitive accumulation and has always been a keystone of every modern banking system; all the great speculative manias that have punctuated the history of capitalism, from the South Sea Bubble through the Crédit Mobilier to the great Wall Street stock market boom-and-crash of the 1920s, have been exercises in the use and misuse of credit; one can even argue, as Samir Amin has recently done, that the functioning of a fully developed, highly complicated capitalist production/circulation process—such as Marx sought to portray in the expanded reproduction schemes of volume 2 of *Capital*—would be impossible in the absence of credit.* And yet it would be hard to deny that something quantitatively and qualitatively new has been added in the latest period, beginning with the establishment of

* Samir Amin, *The Law of Value and Historical Materialism* (Monthly Review Press, 1978), p. 22.

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U.S. hegemony at the end of the Second World War and growing steadily in importance ever since.

This is obviously not the occasion to try to elucidate a subject which is as complex as it is important. I will only mention some of the main elements which would have to be taken into account and accorded their due weight: (1) The development, pioneered by the United States, and greatly facilitated by improved communications and information-processing technologies, of a comprehensive and flexible network of financial institutions geared to serving the needs of giant corporations and the governments which support and defend them. (2) The multinationalization of banking, following in the wake of the multinationalization of industrial and commercial capital. (3) The adoption by capitalist states, directly and through their central banks, of fiscal and monetary policies aimed at preventing the recurrence of serious depressions, such as that of the 1930s, which are perceived by all ruling bourgeoisies as a potentially mortal threat to the continued existence of capitalism. Fiscal and monetary policies of this kind began to be consciously formulated in the 1930s and became normal and accepted functions of the capitalist state after the Second World War. Originally conceived as anti-cyclical (e.g., government deficits in the down phase of the cycle would be matched by surpluses in the upswing), these policies were gradually extended to encompass anti-stagnationist goals, in other words, to exercise an uninterrupted expansionary pressure on overall demand for goods and services. In the United States, which has been the leader in developing these policies (just as it has been in fashioning the new financial institutions to implement them), government deficits had become perennial before the end of the 1960s; and the explosion of private debt, a major consequence of expansionary fiscal and monetary policies, likewise began long before the recession of 1974-1975.

One might suppose, following the logic of Keynesian theory, that persistent expansionary fiscal and monetary policies of this kind could at least overcome the tendency to stagnation. But, paradoxical as it may seem, this has not been the case. The underlying reason is that the economies of the advanced capitalist countries, which constitute the core of the global capitalist

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system, are by now so dominated by giant monopolistic corporations able to control their price and output policies in the interest of maximizing profits that a very large part of the impact of expansionary fiscal and monetary policies takes the form of inflation rather than increases in real output. Furthermore, inflation, once it has reached a certain intensity in terms of magnitude and duration, tends to perpetuate itself through its effects on costs (including the cost of living which is a major determinant of wages) and on expectations.

None of this is to argue that the explosion of debt—which we can now see is but one manifestation of a very complex set of financial and political mechanisms—has no counter-cyclical and/or counter-stagnationist effects. Without it capitalism would probably long since have sunk into a state of near collapse. But sooner or later—and perhaps sooner rather than later—it may turn out that the cure creates problems no less serious than the disease. Already the chemical mixture of growing monopolization, exploding debt, and endemic inflation has given rise to a situation of great and growing instability and tension, reflected particularly in increasingly erratic movements in world financial and foreign-exchange markets. Only time will tell what the future holds in store, but even now it seems safe to say that the crisis of world capitalism is only in its early stages and that many shocks and surprises still await us.

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WEAKNESS AND POTENTIALITIES OF THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT

BY DANIEL SINGER

A century ago Russian tsardom seemed terrorized by a handful of rebels. Today, the Soviet rulers give the impression of not being unduly worried by their dissidents, despite the echo their protests arouse around the world. The reason for this declining power of the dissident intelligentsia cannot be quantitative. Without entering here into a semantic argument about the definition of the intelligentsia, it is obvious that the educated strata from which it is recruited have grown fantastically in the meantime. On the eve of the October Revolution, among the people employed in Russia barely 190,000 specialists had graduated from a university or technical college. By 1976 their number had grown to 24 million. The superior efficiency of a modern totalitarian state, compared with the clumsy cruelty of tsarist repression, cannot on its own explain the political weakness of this new intelligentsia.

This is Daniel Singer's contribution to a colloquium on "Power and Opposition in Post-Revolutionary Societies," organized by the Italian Il Manifesto group and held in Venice in November 1977. The proceedings of the colloquium were published in Italian and French in 1978 and more recently in English by Ink Links in London (distributed in the United States by Pathfinder Press, New York) in Spring 1979 under the same title. Singer's paper is reprinted here by permission of the author and the publisher of the English edition.

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The *narodnik* terrorists expressed, in a sense, the discontent of the silent peasant masses and announced the voice of a newcomer—the rising working class. Everybody felt at the time that tsardom was doomed. The post-Stalinist regime, which we shall try to show is by its very nature transitional, may be equally condemned. Yet the voice of the new dissidence, at least such as it is perceived in the West, is clearly not the voice of its gravediggers. The protesters do not give the impression of speaking for any significant segment of Soviet society, not even for the rapidly growing professional intelligentsia.

It is at once easy and awkward to criticize in this way, from a comfortable seat in a safe Western retreat, those who rebel against the mighty police state at the risk of their lives. But the courage of the Soviet protesters is not here at issue. Even if the Soviet Union is no longer quite the concentrationary universe of Stalin's time, the fate of a dissenter is still abominable. All those who are best known in the West, with the exception of the Academician Andrei Sakharov, have traveled through prison camp or psychiatric ward to reach this prominent position. And these well-known figures, though they are permanently harassed, threatened with physical violence and arrest, are relatively safe, protected as they are by the limelight. Far from Moscow, in the distant provinces, the KGB is less bothered by world opinion. In a country where the state is ultimately the sole employer and where the judiciary in political cases is a branch of the police, to express a dissident opinion publicly is a heroic act. What is involved here, therefore, is not the courage of the dissidents but their strategy.

Here again the criticism must be qualified. The common denominator uniting most Soviet protesters is their struggle for civil rights, a perfectly legitimate strategy in the oppressing climate of the allegedly socialist world. That sixty years after the October Revolution the Russians would still be deprived of the elementary freedoms of speech, of assembly, of expression was just unthinkable to a socialist at the time of its outbreak, and this is indeed a major indictment of the Soviet regime. Besides, it is very understandable that intellectuals should be obsessed with the freedom of expression. When an author writes for his drawer, when a scientist cannot communicate with a

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colleague without police permission, when to live and prosper one must "live a lie," such a preoccupation with freedom of thought is more than natural.

But I was not suggesting that in putting civil rights on their metaphorical banner the dissidents are asking too much. On the contrary, they are asking too little or, to be more accurate, too much in the abstract. Nowhere is political freedom won in a void. In Western Europe freedoms were conquered by the bourgeoisie as it struggled to establish its political supremacy and to consolidate its economic domination. Once it had won, it was in no hurry to continue this process. The upper classes were forced to do so by pressure from below; including the pressure of a labor movement fighting to defend its interests. However abstract and general the great principles may sound, they always reflect a balance of power between social forces (sometimes a balance that has already been upset), and they have reached the statute book or constitution as the result of a struggle, as the political confirmation of a successful social movement. The Russian dissidents, on the other hand, act as if the virtue of human rights increased with their divorce from social reality, as if the people were magically attracted by this very abstraction. In their programs and proclamations the social content comes as an afterthought, as an insignificant nuisance. This was true from the very beginning. Thus, the important manifesto of Sakharov, Medvedev, and Turchin contained a curiously symptomatic footnote: "We should also deal with social problems." But the social program of the dissident movement is still conspicuous by its absence.

The Russian people have heard enough Orwellian doubletalk to be suspicious. They know that *in theory* they are the masters of their land, their factories, and their own destiny. They also remember that the splendidly democratic Stalin Constitution was proclaimed in 1936 at the very height of Soviet lawlessness. Rightly they tend to look prospective gift horses in the mouth. Yet nowhere do the dissidents explain to them concretely how all these civil rights will affect the everyday life of the laborer and the *kolkhoznik*, the technician and the office worker. Will all these freedoms include the right to strike, to bargain collectively, and equally collectively to determine the

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organization of work? What will equality before the law mean to the hierarchy, to the range of wages and salaries, to the gap between the privileged and the oppressed? And once the party bosses have been pushed aside, what kind of system do the dissenters propose to put in their place?

In the absence of any clear answer to such basic questions, why should Soviet citizens in substantial numbers join the protest movement, knowing full well what tremendous risks such a venture does involve, what abnegation it implies? The misunderstanding is further complicated by the fact that the gap between "them" and "us," between the haves and the have-nots, between the privileged and the masses, is still profound in the Soviet Union and deeply resented. A battle over civil rights without social content, seemingly a conflict over the right to write or to paint freely, may well look to the ordinary Russian as "their" quarrel, a settling of accounts among the privileged.

The, let us hope temporary, setback of the protest movement has coincided with a relative consolidation of the regime. During the first years after Stalin's death, Soviet society seemed in flux, as if it were searching for a new political equilibrium. Brezhnev has frozen it again, re-establishing the total stranglehold of the party apparatus over society and reassuring by the same token the Soviet establishment.

Naturally, the reign of privilege did not start with Stalin's death or the Twentieth Party Congress. If anything, statistics suggest a slight narrowing of the range of wages and salaries during the post-Stalinist period. It may be argued that the *dachas*, exclusive shops, or journeys abroad are not perceived by statistics. Admittedly. But this is not the real question. Privileges were exorbitant in Stalin's time, but they were precarious. The *apparatchik* apparently at the height of his power ran the risk of landing in jail and then trekking to Siberia. Periodic purges prevented the men of the apparatus and other beneficiaries of the regime from consolidating their position. On the morrow of the death of their tyrant *and* benefactor, their collective aspiration was for security of tenure, for stability, allowing them at last to enjoy their privileges in peace (and, who knows, passing them on tomorrow to their children).

Nikita Khrushchev, half peasant and half townsman, im-

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provising all sorts of reforms yet unable to carry any of them to their logical conclusion, was still too threatening for them, because he acted as if aware that for Soviet society to move forward the whole Stalinist heritage would have to be overhauled. Even this clumsy and impotent reformer was too dangerous and had to be got rid of. Leonid Brezhnev, on the contrary, enjoys the confidence of the privileged in general and of the *apparatchiks* in particular. For a very simple reason. The basic premise of his whole policy—within and without—is not to embark on anything likely to shake the structure of power and hence the network of privileges. Herein lies the secret of the long reign of Leonid Brezhnev and his aging team. Let us admit it: thirteen years ago nobody would have imagined that this grey bureaucrat would today still be soldiering on in the Kremlin.

The days of Brezhnev may well be counted. Brezhnevism, on the other hand, can still endure. And yet, despite its lasting life, it has all the features of a transitional regime, plaything of events rather than their master, unable really to solve any of the major issues facing Soviet society. Immobility is the price paid for survival: the regime can do no more than patch up. Without economic dynamism, without ideological illusions among the population, Brezhnevism accumulates contradictions as it puts off the necessary reforms. It probably prepares an explosive future for Russia. In any case, it prepares the ground for a deeper and more radical opposition.

In its foundations the present political system is not essentially different from Stalin's. True, the concentration camps are less packed, the terror is less blind, and the population does not live in permanent fear. But the protesters know the price of dissent. Above all, as in the past, all decisions, all initiatives flow from the top and are imposed on the population. The new constitution solemnly confirms the supremacy of the party; in fact, it is the rule of its apparatus or, to be more precise, of its top leadership.

But if the political system is frozen again, society is not. It goes on being reshaped by profound changes. I shall confine myself here to three interconnected aspects of this transformation: the decline of the peasantry; the rise of the new working

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class and professional intelligentsia; and last but not least, the rising level of education, conceived by the regime as a blessing and which may yet prove for the rulers a curse in disguise.

Decline of the Peasantry

On the eve of the October Revolution, as everybody knows, Russia was submerged in a peasant sea: over 80 percent of the population was living in the countryside. At the beginning of the Second World War town-dwellers still accounted for only a third of the total population. Even at the end of Stalin's reign, six out of ten Soviet citizens were living in the country. Today the proportions are reversed: 62 percent of the population is urban and 38 percent rural. Employment statistics are even more striking. On the eve of the First World War three quarters of the working population were employed in farming; on the eve of the Second World War, one half. Now, the share of farming can be estimated at roughly one quarter.

The social landscape of the countryside has altered as well. State farms, the *sovkhozy*—employing over 10 million Soviet citizens out of about 28 million working on the land—perform a much more important economic function than in the past. The difference has also diminished between these 20,000 *sovkhozy* and the *kolkhozy,* the once dispersed collective farms, today amalgamated into about 27,000 huge units (employing, on an average, 500 people). *Matryona's House,* while still no exception, is no longer really the rule.

One should not jump to the conclusion, inevitably drawn by Soviet propaganda, that Russia is in the process of solving its agricultural problem. Heavy imports of Western wheat are not the only proof to the contrary. The fact that productivity in Soviet farming is roughly one fifth of the American level shows the enormous road still to be traveled. But the political equation has already changed. Before and immediately after the last war, the nightmare of the Soviet leaders was *Bonapartism,* the potential rise of a military leader backed by peasant masses still hankering after private property. This fear is gradually vanishing; this specter is no longer the main danger for the regime. True, the weight of backward, rural Russia is still very heavy. A quarter of total humanpower employed in an agriculture unable to

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fill all the country's needs is undoubtedly a heavy burden for the economy to carry. We should not forget, however, that a similar share prevailed in France twenty years ago and ten years ago in Italy. In Russia, too, the part played by the peasantry declines in importance all the time. Those who, following in Solzhenitsyn's footsteps, are basing their plans for the future on the resurrection of the *muzhik,* on the restoration of a Mother Russia dominated by lesser or bigger landowners, are dabbling in nostalgia rather than dealing with politics.

The New Working Class

The relative decline of the peasantry has been coupled with the rapid growth of the industrial labor force. According to the official statistics on the structure of population, the workers (and their families) account now for 61 percent of the total, compared with a third before the last war; and the employees for 22 percent as against 17 percent. These figures are somewhat misleading since workers include farm laborers if they are employed by state farms and exclude them if they work on collective farms. The data on employment in the national economy are, therefore, more instructive. Industry, building, and transport used to absorb 10 percent of the total labor force before the Revolution and less than 30 percent on the eve of the last war. Today they account for nearly half the working population.

Yet I would like to draw attention to another aspect of this new working class, linked not with its numerical growth but with its nature and its origins. In the first stage of the Soviet industrial revolution—the phase of breakneck industrialization—industrial workers were really peasants transplanted to town; uprooted, semi-literate, these victims of forced collectivization were full of fear and resentment. Once in town, there was no question of their fitting into a working class with its own political consciousness and traditions. They *were* the working class. (For some historians, the *gulag* was, among other things, the barbarian instrument designed to subdue these peasants to the discipline and rhythm of factory life during the period of so-called primitive socialist accumulation.)

Today things are quite different. The urban labor force now expands mainly from within. Migration from country to

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town still counts as a contribution but is becoming marginal. And the migrants themselves are no longer quite the same. Soviet newspapers occasionally complain that the most advanced elements from the countryside—mechanics, tractor drivers, animal specialists, etc. are too often attracted by city lights.

It will be objected that even this new working class is uninterested in politics, sounds cynical, has no collective consciousness or tradition. In the historical context the opposite would be surprising. The fact remains that these workers, sons of workers, less perturbed by the Stalinist nightmare, less frightened and above all more educated than their elders, are potentially a political power.

The level of education is relatively even higher among the "employees," a heterogeneous group accounting for about 30 percent of the Soviet labor force outside collective farming. The Soviet Union has not yet reached the stage of the big boom in the services. The number of workers and employees, i.e., of blue- and white-collar workers, has risen in recent years at roughly the same pace. Among the white-collar workers the fastest expansion has taken place in the social services, particularly in education and health.

"Employed," incidentally, is a convenient concept for statisticians dealing in global figures. You lump in the same bag, on one hand, teachers, municipal employees, shop assistants, all of them at the bottom of the wage scale, and, at the other end, high dignitaries, academicians, all sorts of top servants of the regime, richly rewarded for their devotion. By working out an average you demonstrate that employees have lower wages than industrial workers. Thus it is *proved* that proletarians are the masters in the "workers' fatherland," and the propaganda trick is duly performed.

It is claimed that there are now in the Soviet Union more than 30 million graduates from university and technical colleges. Deducting from this figure officers in the armed forces, old-age pensioners, and housewives, one is left with around 24 million working in the national economy. Professional university graduates are nearly 10 million. Among them over a third are engineering graduates, and teachers account for another third; economists, doctors, and agronomists make up the bulk of the remainder. Graduates from technical colleges—the NCOs of the

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army of labor—are roughly 14 million. All sorts of technicians account for nearly half that number; junior staff in medicine, education, and planning follow well behind. As we saw, this growing professional intelligentsia is very far from homogeneous. Its members differ greatly as regards their wages and privileges, their place in the hierarchy or the part played in production. The dissident movement, when it picks up again, will have to analyze carefully these "new strata" and to split them in the same way as the Western labor movement does, since it can count on an alliance with only one part of the so-called middle classes. But here I just wanted to emphasize a deep social change: with 20 percent of the labor force having more than a secondary education and 75 percent more than an elementary one, Soviet society is very different from that which gave birth to Stalinism.

"Woe from Wit"

Let us not read a miracle into these figures: a quarter of the working people—half of them in collective farms—still have only an elementary education; among the rest many have not actually completed their secondary schooling. Let us not credit the Brezhnev regime with the achievement either. If anything, it has slowed down the rate of progress. "Matriculation for all" was planned to be the absolute rule some time ago, and it still does not apply throughout the country. Plainly, the current regime only benefits from an option taken on the morrow of the October Revolution—the decision to invest heavily in education. The cumulative effects are now being felt, and the average level of education rises substantially from year to year.

I cherish no illusions either about the subversive effect of education as such. The part played by education in the reproduction of the existing system need not be demonstrated here any more than the conformist nature of the Soviet educational model, with its selective nature, its hierarchical structure, its specialization, and its famous courses in Marxism-Leninism just fit to disgust entire generations. When all this has been said, however, it remains true that the more educated young people of today may prove more exacting and less compliant than the uprooted peasants of yesterday. The men in the Krem-

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lin did not bother about it until recently because they thought they had found a magic solution in permanent growth.

The Soviet leaders are probably among the last to believe in the "scientific revolution" and the virtue of growth for its own sake. At a stage when the countryside was beginning to dry up as a source of labor power and when the effects of the falling birth rate were soon to be felt, the newly educated workers were going to come to the rescue, ensuring a rapid rise in productivity and thus paving the way for the "Soviet miracle." The solution was political as well as economic. Gone are the days when the leaders in the Kremlin were offering their citizens, and the world at large, the prospect of an alternative, a different mode of producing and consuming, a different way of life. Their project is the Russian version of the "American dream" and it is by American methods that they hoped to integrate the population. Durable consumer goods—the TV, the washing machine, tomorrow the car—were supposed gradually to replace the knout and the *gulag* as means of social control. Khrushchev even found a name—goulash socialism—to describe this strange mixture.

But the miracle did not happen. The mechanism through which Stalinism was to be dismantled—reforms-progress, progress-reforms—got stuck and even started functioning in reverse. The dream may well turn into a nightmare for the regime. The rising generations, yesterday the source of hope, are now a major cause for worry. How are they to be contained and integrated into a system which lacks political drive and cannot compensate through economic dynamism?

The Slackening Pace

The contrast between the Khrushchevian dream and Soviet reality can be illustrated graphically. In a famous speech, at the Twenty-second Party Congress in 1961, Krushchev set the country's economic targets for 1980. At the most recent Party Congress, Kosygin presented the five-year plan to be completed in 1980. The gap between the two blueprints is enormous. If the curve had followed Khrushchev's forecasts rather than the new version, by 1980 the Soviet economy would be using twice as much electric power and the Russians would be

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eating twice as much meat. And they would be getting every year four times as much housing accommodation.

The irrepressible Nikita, it will be said, had more imagination than his pedestrian successors. Undoubtedly. But his "communist program" for 1980 was no flight of fancy. Like a vulgar Doctor Strangelove from some Hudson Institute, he merely projected past curves into the future. The difference between his program and the new one thus shows a radical change in the pace of progress, a shift that is actually confirmed by official figures: the annual rate of growth now being planned (4.7 percent) is not even half as fast as it used to be in the 1950s. The decline has been slow but steady; in the long run it is perturbing for a regime which, like its Western counterparts, must rely on material progress to contain social pressures.

What can it do to spur the economic engine and give it a new lease on life? One possibility must be ruled out by definition: the search for a socialist way out. To decentralize by shifting initiative to the rank and file, to attack the hierarchical system and its values, all this cannot be confined to the four walls of the factory. The whole system stands together and it would collapse under such a push from below. The rulers in the Kremlin have no death wish, and the very idea of a workers' council, of a genuine *soviet* sends shivers down their spine. Hence one must contemplate either a closer integration into the capitalist world market—with borrowing of both capital and technology—or internal reforms in the management of the economy (the first solution leading inevitably to the second).

Russia has partly opened its frontiers. In the last ten years foreign trade has expanded twice as fast as the national product, and the share of advanced capitalist countries in this trade has increased. This shift is not insignificant. Yet to have a major influence on the Soviet economy, the collaboration would have to move beyond the stage of Western credits repaid through Russian exports of raw materials. Western capitalists would have to invest heavily in Soviet industry, and this they would only do for profit. Which brings us back to the managerial reform.

Stalinist planning had become too crude and centralized for the complex economy it had helped to develop. Already back in the 1950s there was the question of providing more flexibility

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by allowing more scope for profits as a measure of efficiency.* This is neither the place nor the time to review all the abortive reforms, all the half-measures that have failed since then. It is enough to ask why they have failed. The usual explanation puts the blame on the resistance of the *apparatchiks*. Admittedly even in its versions leaving key decisions to the central planner, the reform would have deprived the party apparatus of its role as overseer at all levels and thus loosened its stranglehold over society. The explanation, though correct within limits, is not sufficient. There is, it seems to me, a deeper reason. Pushed to its logical conclusion, the economic reform must lead to a reform in the management of the firm, to wider powers being granted to the factory director, including the power to hire and fire as well as to decide the level of wages. Yet such a reform would mean for the workers an open attack on what is left of their conquests of October—the security of employment with all that it involves. It could thus lead to a revival of an autonomous labor movement. Hence the hesitation waltz of the post-Stalinist regime and the ultra-conservatism of Leonid Brezhnev. And yet, because the alternative road of workers' democracy is blocked, this is the direction the regime is likely to take sooner or later.

From Above or From Below

Let us look in this context at the old controversy over the nature of possible change in post-Stalinist Russia. Will it come from above or from below, from the apex or from the base, from within or without the Party? These debates were a kind of Western counterpoint to Khrushchev's goulash socialism. In their more sophisticated versions the gradualist, Fabian theses did not rely simply on the goodwill of the reformers. They included social constraints and pressures from below to project an image of Russia traveling in reverse the road which had led from the dictatorship of the proletariat to the tyranny of the General-Secretary. This controversy is now outdated. Even before Khrushchev's fall, and certainly since the invasion of Czechoslovakia, it is obvious that the system has its logic, the bureauc-

* A strategy known in the West as "Libermanism," after one of its advocates, an economics professor from Lvov.

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racy an instinct for survival, and that it will not hesitate to strike ruthlessly if its vital interests are at stake.

Does this mean that inner struggles at the top are of no interest to us? Not at all. Naturally, it would be absurd to await the advent of socialist democracy as a gift from above, as the result of the action of some "liberal-democratic wing." All hypotheses of this kind rest on the strange premise of a Soviet Union enjoying already a socialist structure to which must be added a democratic superstructure. Let us be serious. We are interested in such inner struggles at the top not for what they can bring by themselves but because of the influence they can exercise on mass movements. Russia will probably have to move further to the right, if one may use such a term, before it jumps in the opposite direction. The system will still consolidate privileges, strengthen the hierarchy, increase the powers of the managers, before it sets its gravediggers into motion.

I would like to make here what merely looks like a digression and put at the heart of our debate the question of Poland where, in December 1970, the workers made a sudden and spectacular entry on the political stage and where, without program or organization, they have weighed heavily on the course of events ever since. Is Poland the exception to the rule of the Soviet bloc or, on the contrary—as I believe—is it simply in advance, foreshadowing the social struggles to come? I want to make myself quite clear. Obviously, every situation is specific. The development of the movement in each country will depend on the circumstances, on traditions, on the economic situation, on the cleverness or stupidity of the leadership, and so on. But the same causes should, in the long run, produce the same effects. The Polish workers were driven to action by attempts to "put the house in order," to "modernize." The whole of Eastern Europe now enters a period of restructuring, and it would not be surprising if the Polish example were infectious.

The part played in Poland by dissident intellectuals is equally instructive. They too once preached in the desert. In 1968 the police clubbed rebellious students amid the sinister silence of society at large. In 1977, on the other hand, after the second workers' rising, a few intellectuals seized the occasion

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to insert themselves into a social movement by founding the KOR, the Committee for the Defense of Workers. Everywhere dissident intellectuals will count as a political force to the extent that they manage to forge links with the working class.

Before concluding I would like to clear up some possible misunderstandings. In such a brief intervention, sketchy by its very nature, I left out of account many possibilities. On purpose. Thus, in the Soviet equation I did not mention at all the national question, nor did I envisage the convulsions which may shake a society without apparent outlets. Secondly, I hope that by putting the emphasis on the labor movement I did not create a lyrical illusion nor give the impression that in Poland, in Russia, or elsewhere a proletariat fully armed with political consciousness would take over tomorrow. I know that the making or re-making of a labor movement, the transformation of the working class into a class-for-itself is always a complex process, with dramatic highlights but also with long periods of slow, subterranean growth. This process will be particularly difficult in countries suffering from collective amnesia, where possibilities of legal organization are nil and where any action is terribly dangerous. All that I wanted to suggest is that our old friend the mole does not stop digging on reaching the border of the Soviet bloc, that there, too, social contradictions can provide opportunity for revolutionary change. I wanted to suggest a possible way.

If hope there is, it brings obligations in its wake. For our East European comrades the task is immense and tough. Not only because they have to face a ruthless police repression. To think and even more to speak as a Marxist in countries where the very term has been usurped as the gospel preached by the rulers, the exploiters—those who wield the club and call on the tanks—is not an easy mission. And yet the only chance for the dissidents lies in this inspiration. Only if it gets integrated in a social movement, if it is backed by the working class and its new potential allies, if it manages to present its interests as "the superior interests of society as a whole," only then will the new dissident movement be able to play a historical role in Eastern Europe.

There is no need to add that it has every right to demand our solidarity. The struggle is common in more senses than

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one. The international economic crisis opens a new era, foreshadows upheavals of which we still can only guess the shape and size. A rigid, frozen Soviet bloc would act as a brake on changes in the West. But the reverse is even more true. If a breach were to be opened within the Western capitalist bloc, if in France, in Italy, or in Spain, and if the movement then tackled the real issues—social relations, equality, the hierarchical order, the division of labor, the withering away of the state—if it showed in this way that the workers can really become the masters of their fate, the echo would be tremendous, not just in Prague or Warsaw but in Kiev and Moscow too. Hence, oblivious to current Parisian fashions, I shall conclude with a quotation from Marx, speaking to the Chartists on the anniversary of another Polish insurrection: "So you Chartists must not simply express pious wishes for the liberation of nations. Defeat your own internal enemies and you will then be able to pride yourselves on having defeated the entire old society."

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CABRAL ON THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION

BY BASIL DAVIDSON

When Africans of Portugal's empire began at last to make their voices heard in the world outside their barricaded colonies, soon after the middle of the 1950s, they found few to listen to them and fewer still to understand the importance of what they were proposing to do. The outside world, they learned, knew little of Portugal itself, let alone of Portuguese Africa: and, knowing little, cared even less.

Yet these Africans and their companions in struggle, fewer than twenty years later, had moved into the very heart and center of the world's attention. And no wonder; for, whether greatly admired or as greatly hated, they were seen by their own efforts to have wrecked the forty-year-old dictatorship of fascist Portugal and destroyed the Portuguese empire. They were seen to have radically changed the balance of African power and influence in decisive areas of the continent, and above all in relation to the racist regimes of the far south and the various African agents of those regimes. They were seen to have built powerful movements of revolutionary challenge and changed the course of African history. And all this they were seen to have

This article is the introduction to *Unity and Struggle*, a collection of speeches and writings by Amilcar Cabral, selected by the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde). *Unity and Struggle* will be published jointly by Heinemann (London) and Monthly Review Press (New York) in October. Basil Davidson has written extensively on Africa. Among his recent books is *Let Freedom Come: Africa in Modern History*.

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done in territories where a more or less complete "colonial silence" and stagnation had previously reigned.

How was this possible among populations reputed to be among the most "backward" in all Africa: populations having only 1 or 2 percent of literate persons, possessing almost no access of any kind to modern technology, or to modern ideas, or to modern forms of organization, and meanwhile suffering from the most repressive of all the colonial regimes? How could it be done?

It may be too soon for history's definitive answers. But just as the importance of what these Africans achieved is now very clear, whether in relation to their own territories or to the more general issues of anti-colonial and post-colonial change, so are some of the reasons for their success. Among these were the absolute intransigence of the fascist regime and the consequence of this intransigence for the thought and practice of African nationalists who had to meet and overcome it; the efficacy of that thought and practice as it developed in largely peasant societies; the international links that were forged with governments and groups willing to give material and moral aid to these nationalists; the fact that Lisbon was obliged to fight wars in three territories at the same time, and to fight them, moreover, on the self-defeating principles of fascism; and other reasons deriving from these or added to these.

But history's definitive analysis will go beyond these instrumental reasons for a remarkable success. It will ask and answer other and more decisive questions. Who were the men and women who conceived the possibility of liberation, back in the dark days of its beginnings in these territories? Who forged the instruments, learned to use them, taught others to use them, led these struggles through every kind of mental ambush and physical barrier? What were their ideas, what was their morality? Whose were the keys that could unlock that seemingly unpassable door to freedom, to any useful unity and progress, and trample on its fortifications? How far can others use the same keys?

These are the questions, no doubt, that matter most to a world still sorely needing keys of this kind; and, happily, these questions can be largely answered by the record as we have it, even now. That is what this book is about. These long and diffi-

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cult campaigns for anti-colonial and post-colonial liberation and development in the African empire of the Portuguese—in Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé—produced a number of outstanding revolutionary thinkers who proved able to live their thought in their practice, and who, in doing that, have displayed a rare and often decisive talent for *explanation* in writing and the spoken word. Among these thinkers, and even at the head of them, was Amilcar Cabral, the author of the writings in this book. Murdered by the agents of Portuguese fascism in 1973, his work lives after him and is there for inspection. A supreme educator in the wisest sense of the word, Cabral can be recognized even now as being among the great figures of our time. We need not wait for history's judgment to tell us that. The evidence is available. Among this evidence are the texts that follow here.

It would be easy to write of him as a person and a friend, though it would also be difficult: easy because of his simplicity and sympathy, his directness, his love of life, his enduring interest in everyone and everything that came his way; and yet difficult, too, because of the depth and complexity of his thought and meditation. Suffice it here to say that he was loved as well as followed, and both because he was large-hearted, entirely committed, utterly devoted to his people's progress. But of course you can be devoted and still reach wrong conclusions. Cabral was also loved and followed because events repeatedly proved that he could and did reach the right conclusions. The imperfections that were as natural to him as to any other vivid human being were outmatched, it was seen, by intellectual and moral power in all that mattered most, in whatever could be decisive. And he asked of no one what he would not do himself.

When in 1956 he launched his revolutionary party—the PAIGC, Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo Verde—he had five trusted companions and no more. Long before he was killed, the PAIGC had become a national movement of overwhelming power and influence. When he first set out to win support in Europe during 1960, he had to travel under an assumed name, Abel Djassi, and found not many to welcome him. Long before his death in 1973 the meetings he addressed in Europe and outside Europe were attended by

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thousands, governments asked his advice, other governments listened to him, the United Nations gave him its platform, and a wide audience in many countries looked to him for leadership. He took all this fame in his stride, having no self-indulgence for big words or big claims, and replied that hard work and hard thought in his people's cause, holding nothing back, were the only factors that could count.

But if one had to define a single influential aspect of Cabral's approach, perhaps it would be his insistence on the study of reality. "Do not confuse the reality you live with the ideas you have in your head," was a favorite theme in his seminars for party militants. Your ideas may be good, even excellent, but they will be useless ideas unless they spring from and interweave with the reality you live in. What is necessary is to see into and beyond appearances: to free yourself from the sticky grasp of "received opinions," whether academic or otherwise. Only through a principled study of reality, of the strictly *here* and *now,* can a theory of revolutionary change be integrated with its practice to the point where the two become inseparable. This is what he taught. But the manifest fact that he practiced what he taught in all that mattered most, in whatever could be decisive, was another factor that convinced.

There are many stories about his habit of linking the everyday scene, the banal scene you take for granted and barely even see, with the intellectual groundwork of an overall theory of society: of a theory, that is, always riveted to the reality of time and place. One might even say that this habit was amongst his most persuasive gifts as an educator. Well known in Guinea-Bissau, for example, is what he one day said after watching a boy of eleven in a dugout canoe. This was a scene that those who were with him had known a thousand times, as he had, or as often acted it themselves: the boy in the canoe balancing his body against the thrust of his paddle so as to keep the lip of the wood above the tide, working across the ocean creek, swinging to approach the shore, deciding how to land beyond the current's clutch, then stowing the paddle and leaping ashore where the mud was firmest. What could anyone say about any of that: save perhaps, if you were an educated "doctor" from Lisbon, that here was another aspect of Africa's "backwardness," of

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Africa's "cultural void"? But Cabral passed no such comment. He talked instead of the skills required to use that excavated log of wood, and said: "You see. Environment, they say, is formative of culture. If that is so, then ours is a highly cultivated people." And he proceeded, while the boy danced up the mud and vanished amid the mangrove trunks, to draw appropriate conclusions from the dialectical interplay of culture and environment.

The texts that follow here display this approach at many levels and in many circumstances. For this reason, among others, they go far to explain the major influence of his thought in three concentric fields: at home in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde; in the wider African scene; and in the world outside Africa. They are not by any means all that he wrote or spoke for publication. Selected by the editorial care of the National Council of Culture of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, these texts amount to some two thirds of the French edition of his work that was published by François Maspero in 1975. But even the Maspero edition, though running to six hundred pages, is far from complete, for this greatly gifted man found time and need to write copiously; and many of his reflections, statements, directives, and informal lectures for internal use remain in PAIGC archives.

A full history of the national liberation struggle of the PAIGC will one day take account of all his writings. They will be found to accompany every phase and critical decision of the period before the war was launched in January 1963, as well as of the ten years that followed till his death. They include dozens of letters and directives. Their "guides to action" range from a detailed analysis of helicopters and how to shoot them down to a long series of operational orders to troops in the field. Their notes from internal lectures and seminar discussions cover a multitude of everyday events and aspects of ideological development within the PAIGC. Perhaps above all, they deal repeatedly with the necessary bases of revolutionary democracy, whether in the liberation of women, in anti-elitist education, in a decentralized system of public health, and, as the essential guarantee of all such gains, in the building of participatory political structures at and from the grass roots.

But the texts presented here are likely to be seen as Cabral's

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most influential work in theoretical and practical exposition. They can be said to fall into two connected parts: the texts written or spoken (but taped and then transcribed) for his own internal audience, the militants of the PAIGC and all who were active in its ranks; and, secondly, the texts conceived with an external audience chiefly in mind. One may note in passing that no contradiction will be found to arise between these two: what Cabral said at home was the same in content as what he said abroad, even if the form was often very different. His argument abroad, and he was often a brilliant publicist, was invariably the truth that he drew from his study of reality at home: the same truth, with the same conclusions, that he expounded in the forests of his homeland. So that these texts may better be seen as I think Cabral would have seen them: as texts concerned for different purposes with a theory of effective action for determined ends; and, secondly, as texts concerned for the same purposes with the practice of that theory. Given their range and diversity, the reader will find his or her own preferences. But a few comments on them may be useful here.

Whether for an internal or external audience they will be found to be all of a piece in another important sense. Each in its own way has Cabral's insistence on looking squarely into the particular reality of time and place, on inspecting this reality in its parts and in its whole, and then on drawing from it the lessons that can be useful to progress. Such was his practice. As to his theory, evolving over all the years of struggle from soon after the Second World War, its development and nature emerge with an especial clarity from two or three of the "external" texts (made abroad, that is, but then used by the PAIGC at home): for example, his 1966 address on "Presuppositions and objectives of national liberation in relation to social structure" (item 14), perhaps the chief text which established Cabral as an original thinker in the Marxist tradition, and a lecture of 1970 on "National Liberation Culture" (item 15) which offers another insight, opened this time on the cultural implications of liberation struggle, into the critical subtlety of his thought.

The opening pair of items make a very effective introduction to reading Cabral. Two poems indicate something of the underlying passion of his sense of self-identity with the situation

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into which he was born in Guinea-Bissau, at Bafata where forest and savannah meet, and grew to manhood in the sister land of the Cape Verde archipelago where his father was a teacher at Santa Caterina on the island of Santiago and, not incidentally for Cabral's youthful development, a fervent defender of Cape Verdean folklore and popular culture. But the next item here is altogether of a different sort. It is not a bit poetic. It consists of extracts from the thoroughgoing agricultural survey of Guinea-Bissau that Cabral made when, briefly in colonial service as an agricultural engineer before the early onset of the struggle, he studied his own country at the grass roots and came to know it better than anyone else. The survey took him two years to complete, and the Portuguese ignored it. But for him these facts and findings were to provide the foundations of his theory of anti-colonial revolution and post-colonial development in Guinea-Bissau. When he spoke of these matters afterwards, he did so from an intimate and even unique knowledge of his country's peoples and their cultures, problems, ways of life.

Item 3 is the pamphlet that he wrote in London, in French for English translation, during a stay of many weeks during 1960, and at a time when he considered, as did his comrades from other Portuguese colonies, that they must study this "outside world" they had to come to grips with, but also begin to make their voices heard in it. Here one may find, at least in outline, many of the chief arguments that later years would develop in more detail; and one finds them, characteristically again, not only for his own country but also for Angola, Mozambique, and São Tomé. Cabral concentrated on the problems of his own people, but he never forgot that these problems and his people belonged to a wider world.

With items 4 to 12 we find him again among his own people, and intimately so. These nine texts were selected from numerous tape recordings of an extended seminar given by him to an assembly of leading militants during November 1969, when the armed struggle against colonial rule was nearly seven years old but still far from ended. These lectures and replies to discussion were spoken in the creole of Guinea-Bissau (a language combining an indigenous syntax, drawn from other local languages such as Pepel and Manjaco, with Portuguese words

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and usages), and were given extempore or from a minimum of notes. That is why their style is so informal and easygoing; but they will be read profitably for their style as well as for their content. Better perhaps than in any other African texts from any source, here one may see just what the intellectual promotion and development of a liberation movement must entail: the patient discussion of terms, the advance of the argument from stage to stage, the continued emphasis on a principled inspection of the reality within which one lives and upon which one must work.

Again we are far from slogans or facile statements of denunciation or triumph. A gathering of political workers and fighters, many at an early stage of literacy or not yet of any literacy, almost none with any habit of learning from books, all but a handful knowing no more than a purely local experience, is drawn into a prolonged debate on the theory of what has to be done. Each has to understand and measure the part of his or her own task in that theory, and yet perceive the wider connections. Perhaps it is this last emphasis that explains why the overall effect is repeatedly one of wide application: here are problems which concern us all, even though our circumstances seem altogether different. A reading of these nine texts, holding in mind the conditions under which they emerged, the audience, and the conjuncture of the year 1969, can tell one much about the whole struggle in the Portuguese colonies and even, or so it appears to me, about the universal aspects of any liberation struggle conducted so as to succeed.

But practice, Cabral used to say, comes before theory. Closely linked to these texts of 1969 are eight others of four years earlier, items 25 to 32. Gathered under the heading of "general watchwords," these are concerned above all with practice. Conceived in 1964 and written in 1965 into a booklet called *Palavras Geráis*, for strictly internal use, they march together with the theory of national liberation, of the politics of liberation, which Cabral and his leading companions had already begun to elaborate. Concisely and even curtly and never in the least ambiguously, these directives define the action and approach that Cabral considered vital to success. They became from the time of their issue within the PAIGC, in November

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1965, the "book of reference" for every militant, whether by direct reading or by reading aloud to those who could not read. Downright as always with him, critical and self-critical, sparing no private corners of doubt or evasion, they form one of the most instructive manuals of practical revolution—of revolution, that is, specific to its time and place—to have reached us from any source.

A historian will be especially impressed by these directives of 1965. At a stage when the PAIGC was still weak in the number of its trained militants, when its political organization in liberated areas had yet to move beyond initial phases, and when its fighting organization was still in relative infancy, Cabral lays down a program for development, a series of targets to be achieved, a guide to reaching them, and a style of behavior (whether individual or collective), that will steer the PAIGC through all its problems to the end of the war and beyond. This is what events will prove; but the foresight is extraordinary. Much will be taken further in the years that follow. Yet already the characteristic tones are here, the tones that will afterward be recognized across the world. "Hide nothing from our people . . . tell no lies . . . claim no easy victories"; but all the time explain, discuss, debate, argue, learn and, above all, *lead*. It is here in the general directives, as in the seminar texts of 1969, that one may well be reaching the true genius of this man.

He enlarged on the experience of his party, on the lessons it had accepted, the mistakes it had made, the successes it had won, in many other documents. Occasionally he was willing to build all this into a general framework of analysis and prescription, as for example in his Havana address of 1966 and his Syracuse lecture of 1970, already mentioned. At other times, as in his UN speech printed as item 34, he preferred to enlarge on the particular circumstances of the stages of its growth and development. He did this, too, in many communiqués and notably in annual reviews of progress (items 23 and 24).

But a selection aiming to be comprehensive at least in offering the diversity of his writing has to show many aspects of the problems that he faced. One of these aspects arose from his concern with history: with the theme that African history, stopped by colonial intrusion, could embark once more upon

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its own development only through the awakened consciousness and objective gains of a struggle such as the PAIGC had launched. This insistence on the absolute need for revolutionary change from the colonial or neocolonial condition did not lead him, however, into denying the earlier achievements of African nationalism. On the contrary, it was the pioneers of African nationalism who had opened the way (item 13), and now, partly thanks to them, it was for others to press further.

Nor did his insistence on the need for revolutionary struggle ever lead him into any acceptance of violence for its own sake. Anti-colonial counter-violence was necessary in Guinea-Bissau, as in other colonies so situated. But this counter-violence, for Cabral, still remained the particular *political* form which any progress must demand. Power did not come from the barrel of a gun in any primary sense: power came, and must come, always from the consistent application of a just political analysis and program across the whole field of effort, including the military field. He raised an army, led and taught it how to fight, gave it detailed orders, supervised its every major action; but he did all this, by the habit of his practice, through a process of collective political discussion. Counter-violence was unavoidable, but it was still a monster to be used with care, kept firmly on a guiding rein, and never preferred to non-violent action if that could yield the same results. All through its years of toughest fighting the PAIGC was repeatedly offered as a partner for Portugal as soon as Portugal shed its fascism, surrendered its empire, and turned towards the future. Items 17 to 20 are four texts which illustrate Cabral's general position that armed warfare should be always an extension of political warfare.

And it had its due effect. In April 1974 the Portuguese officers of the Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA) overthrew the dictatorship on the dual slogan of "Decolonization and Democratization." Some of the most active of these officers, as they bore witness then or later, had learned their politics of liberation from the example of the PAIGC. "The colonized peoples and the people of Portugal are allies," declared the assembly of the MFA officers of Guinea-Bissau in a unanimous statement of June 1974: "The struggle for national liberation has contributed powerfully to the overthrow of fascism and, in large

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degree, has lain at the base of the MFA whose officers have learned in Africa the horrors of the fruitless war, and so have understood the roots of the evils which afflict the society of Portugal." And it may well be thought that these words enshrine one of Cabral's greatest victories, though sadly a posthumous one.

The acid test of a revolutionary leader has to lie in his or her effectiveness. By the time of his death in January 1973 the policies Cabral had shaped with his companions had very obviously won the war: the end came sooner than expected, but delay would have made no essential difference. Then what about the peace that followed? This is a story that still unfolds. Yet the manner of its unfolding from the time when fighting ceased early in 1974, and Portugal conceded independence in September 1974, and the new republic took command of its dual heritage—its heritage of socio-political development within the liberated areas but of colonial ruin outside them—and began to live in peace, shows at every essential point the value and effectiveness of the policies and programs shaped under Cabral's leadership for the future.

Whether in Guinea-Bissau or its sister Republic of Cape Verde, these policies and programs were then applied in style as in content, and were found to meet the challenges of peace and reconstruction. Increasingly, toward the end of his life he had begun to turn his mind to those challenges. But if the precise conclusions that he reached with his companions are present in these wartime texts only by implication, they will be found, written large and clear, in the analytical reviews issued by the PAIGC since the war ended: for example, in the *Relatório geral* offered by Aristides Pereira, Cabral's successor as secretary-general, to the third congress of PAIGC in November 1977.

There, for example, one may find the reflection of one of his firmest beliefs: that further progress in any African development must require a steady advance toward new and organic unities of thought and action. The building of independent nations must be the prelude to the building of larger constellations of independence. And this, too, he saw as the necessary evolution of an African history which regains command of itself and is therefore able, with due time and effort, to move forward

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into a fully post-colonial society. With due time and effort: for this process, in his thinking, could never be achieved by any extension of the colonial heritage, whether political or economic or cultural. It would come, on the contrary, only through a continued process of social and structural revolution capable of drawing whole peoples into an arena of active participation: an arena thereby freed of old servitudes, old inferiorities, old miseries. Then, but only then, would Africa realize its potentials.

"My own view," he said in 1967, "is that there are no real conflicts between the peoples of Africa. There are only conflicts between their elites. When the peoples take power into their own hands, as they will with the march of events in this continent, there will remain no great obstacles to effective African solidarity." But having said this he once came down, as he always did, to the cases that he knew himself. For it could be no good talking about any theory of social change unless this theory, he was careful to insist, stood firmly on a known and practical reality. Progress, to mean anything, had to be in the here and in the now. So he went on, in that conversation of 1967, to show that a real and practical process of developing solidarity of thought and action was now in fact at work among the previously divided peoples of his own country, Balanta, Manjaco, Mandinga, and the rest. Yet if mass participation in social and cultural change could bring this unifying process into motion within one country, why should it not be able to bring it into motion between different countries? Specifically in his own case, it could and would do this between Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. And ten years later, in 1977, the *Relatório geral* of Aristides Pereira, reporting for the PAIGC, was able to list the practical ways in which a unifying process had indeed been set in motion between those two countries.

Cabral gave his life for the liberation that he served, and he had to give it long before his time and when he was still in the full zest and vigor of his work. What else he gave is displayed at least in the outline of its manifold mastery of revolutionary thought and action in the pages of this book. They can only suggest the splendor of the man himself. But they are the record of him that we have. It is a record that will count in Africa, and outside Africa, beyond our time.

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BIRTHDAY SONG BY E. Y. HARBURG

Sung to the tune of "The Streets of Laredo"

This song was originally written for MR's fifteenth anniversary. Yip Harburg revised and augmented it for the thirtieth anniversary.—Ed.

When I was a lad
I wrote amorous ditties,
To Judy, Aleine, Edelina, and Sue,
But now that I'm gray
I've abandoned those pretties,
I'm singing my songs to the MONTHLY REVIEW.

For as you grow older
You sometimes grow wiser
If brain cells are plenty
And hormones are few
Why torture yourself with Elaine or Eliza
You're safer by far with the MONTHLY REVIEW.
That most intellectual
Slightly subsexual
Marx will protect you all MONTHLY REVIEW.

For fifteen long years
I've perused and pursued her,
I've waited whole months
For a sight of her, too
Whatever her mood
I still wooed and renewed her
That beautiful, sensible MONTHLY REVIEW.

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II

I followed her madly
From Vietnam to China
To Cuba, to Ghana, New Guinea, Peru,
I may have been faithless
To my Edelina,
But not to that siren, the MONTHLY REVIEW.
That wise and effectively
Spoken objectively
Let's love collectively MONTHLY REVIEW.

Her light is the light
In the eyes of all lovers,
Her voice is the sound
Of a morning that's new
I take her to bed
And I find between covers
The comforting lines of my MONTHLY REVIEW.

Her format is lovely,
Her layout historic
Her foresight and hindsight
Are beautiful too,
Forgive me for being
So meta-euphoric
I swoon for my beautiful MONTHLY REVIEW.
That wholly reliable
Vibrant and viable
Tho F.B.I.-able MONTHLY REVIEW.

III

So here's to the goal
Of her bold aspirations,
And may the great day
Of her dream soon come true,
A lot more subscriptions
A few more donations
Will speed the good health of the MONTHLY REVIEW.

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Oh bright be her journey,
Her long road made easy,
And strong be the hearts
Of her staff and her crew,
And blessed be her pilots
Brave Magdoff and Sweezy
And all the fine friends of the MONTHLY REVIEW.

IV

And let us remember the Sybils, the Hubys,
The Harrys and others who brighten this night,
We honor their courage, rejoice in their humor
We sing in their spirit
We walk in their light.
With their anti-insanity
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ON THE NATURE OF "LEFTIST JUNTAS"

BY BEFEKADU ZEGEYE

The Third World today is rife with military governments of one kind or another, ranging from out-and-out fascistic regimes (Chile) to those that claim socialist and revolutionary ideals (Ethiopia, Algeria). The purpose of this article is to examine states of the latter type, since on the left, particularly in the Western countries, there seems to be an extraordinary amount of confusion about the nature of the so-called leftist juntas. Instead of studying and clearly defining its stand vis-à-vis these governments, many on the left have resigned themselves to accepting them just because they, too, wear socialist labels of sorts.

In the Third World, the military, along with the bureaucracy, tends to represent the most modern, technologically advanced, highly educated sector of society. Moreover, its sense of

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discipline and national purpose are major political assets. In nations where regional, tribal, and religious affiliations still command strong loyalties, any cohesive and well-organized group like the military has a decided advantage—and can easily become a powerful political force.

How to account for the increasingly dominant role of the military and its civilian allies in the state apparatus? Given the history of the Third World, it is hardly an anomaly. Indeed, the former colonial rulers consciously set out to undermine the development of the nations they dominated, preventing the maturation of political and economic forces in these countries and thus delaying—or sometimes forestalling altogether—the natural emergence of more traditional types of ruling classes there. When these former colonies won political independence, the departing (metropolitan) rulers bequeathed their power of national management to those who had been trained, either in the bureaucracy or in business enterprise, for a dependent (comprador) relationship. Thus was the machinery set in motion for the creation of a new type of bourgeoisie. It was a class in the making, lacking private wealth but able to dominate the state through its organizational skills and control of the bureaucratic apparatus. In the neocolonial arrangement, as in the previous era, the wealth of the nation was still under the thumb of foreign companies and their governments.

This new administrative class—the petty bourgeoisie or, more precisely, the *organizational bourgeoisie*—soon recognized that its strength lay in the control of the state apparatus and so became a strong proponent of state domination of society in all areas of life. And so the groundwork was laid for what is popularly known as the totalitarian state—the more accurate term is *corporate state*—in which the ruling class frequently functions as manager rather than owner, yet reaps all the usual rewards of an ownership role.

In such situations, the role of the state continues to expand in many different areas, the two most important being the economy, where it supplements or complements neocolonialist structures, and political and social institutions, where it provides the necessary aura of legitimacy. Once the organizational bourgeoisie drops all pretensions of being mere administrators and

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goes after the full consolidation of state power, it must consider centralization and control to be its primary goals: "For the petty bourgeoisie to be solidly in power, it must give free rein to its natural tendencies to become more bourgeois."[1]* Through the exercise of its ability to coerce, punish, and reward, it extends its authority to extra-legal limits—a sort of overcompensation, perhaps, for its lack of traditional economic power bases.

This is one of the reasons why bureaucratic and military alliances of the "leftist" type must always attempt to nationalize all available wealth and property. Even the right-wing juntas (Brazil is a striking example) are rarely known to shy away from extensive nationalization, given the opportunity. The urgent need to establish an economic base for newly acquired political power is not limited to military governments but characterizes all Third World countries where a traditional type of ruling class fails to emerge and the petty bourgeoisie is obliged to fill the vacuum.

In much of the Third World (the exceptions being countries like Algeria where colonialism was defeated through military struggle), political independence initially means that power is handed over by the departing colonizers to the civilian sector of the organizational bourgeoisie, with the military restricted to its traditional supportive and protective role. After a time, however, if these civilian governments prove incompetent or otherwise fail to meet the expectations of their neocolonial masters, the military is called upon to intervene. As the sole group possessing mobility, humanpower, a communications network, firepower, disciplined organization, and some degree of administrative expertise, the military has no real competition in terms of its ability to launch an immediate counter-offensive against any threat to the fledgling status quo.

Who makes the decision to have the military intervene? Usually it is done at the behest of members of the upper strata of the civil service, businessmen (comprador type), and senior military officers—with the active participation of neocolonial advisors. The kind of change that ensues, needless to say, is merely cosmetic and represents no real change at all.

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* Notes will be found at the end of the article.

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In countries where the so-called leftist juntas emerge, it is in the final analysis through the collaboration of the two junior sectors of the organizational bourgeoisie: the military on the one hand; the technocrats and, to a certain degree, the intelligentsia on the other. These are groups that tend to be dissatisfied with the neocolonial arrangement, since they do not directly or substantially benefit from the expertise or investments of the continued foreign presence in their countries.

The leadership of these rebellious sectors is drawn mainly from the officer corps (ranging from the rank of second lieutenant to colonel) and from the middle level of the bureaucratic establishment. In the beginning, one may find a handful of rank-and-file soldiers and civilians among them as well. But this is tolerated only until the rebels have consolidated their control; then these temporary leaders find themselves stripped of power—and sometimes facing prison, exile, or death.

The rebels tend to be from a "provincial middle-class" background, as in the case of Peru.[2] Or, to take another example, in Egypt the rebels were "for the most part from the well-to-do families, some from the wealthy and upper classes, some from the middle and lower classes," yet "there were no officers who were members of Egypt's top social aristocracy."[3] These junior members of the organizational bourgeoisie are, to a certain degree, able to share and identify with the peasants' and working class's utter frustration and disillusionment with the established order.

More specifically, as the most educationally advanced members of their class in particular and of society in general, the rebels tend to be impatient with the slow pace of modernization, placing the blame, quite rightly, on the multinational corporations and their local cohorts. They have personal grounds for resentment, too: foreigners often perform the same functions as they do but earn substantially more; while their own senior officials, though in most cases not so well educated as they are, occupy positions of greater responsibility and status. It is not uncommon to find such petty-bourgeois grievances camouflaged with appropriate slogans and presented to the masses as if they were of equal importance to all classes of the population.

This rebel alliance of bureaucrats and soldiers is a union

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against foreign domination and the dependent bourgeoisie. As such, it invariably does its utmost to inflame and exploit the anti-foreign sentiments of the people. Any action the "leftist junta" takes of course is based primarily on its own self-interest, often expressed in the form of nationalization of limited amounts of foreign property or, as in Uganda, in the expulsion of some foreign communities. These measures are used to create a favorable climate of public opinion both at home and in progressive countries abroad. Much too much is made of the supposed benefits of such reforms to the masses, while no mention is made of the junta's true motivation in these matters: the organizational bourgeoisie's natural need to expand as a means of securing its new class position. Nationalization and the ousting of the comprador class (both domestic and foreign) offer temptations even the most revolutionary petty bourgeoisie would find it difficult to resist.

The organizational bourgeoisie's "natural tendencies to become more bourgeois" play a larger role than "leftist junta" members and their supporters are willing to admit. Yet until they are able to acknowledge this fact, they will never be able to commit what the late Amilcar Cabral called "class suicide": rather, they will drift further and further down the road to reaction, all the while continuing to delude themselves about their "revolutionary" contributions. Many of the so-called Arab socialist states, Egypt in particular, show the inherent dangers of such self-deception.

In addition to their natural tendencies, however, "leftist juntas"—and other forms of the corporate state as well—are also forced into centralism and anti-imperialism by the dictates of material conditions in their respective countries. The urgent need to industrialize and increase per capita and national income leads many of these governments to seek ways of minimizing the power of the imperialist world order over their economies. Few, however, go beyond the exploratory stages, for the attempt to embark on a noncapitalist form of development poses great problems for the nations that tackle it.

National industrial development outside the framework of the imperialist economy—i.e., without heavy foreign assistance or investment—is an undertaking very difficult if not impos-

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sible for a small Third World country to handle. Even if a nation opts for a gradual, small-scale approach to development, using agricultural surplus as investment capital, it will eventually still be forced more and more to deal with the neocolonialist world market. To develop the agricultural economy further and realize a greater rate of profit, it must increasingly turn toward commercial agriculture and the export market—thus once again risking the danger of falling into the hands of the despised foreign bourgeoisie.

The "leftist junta," caught between the twin evils of neocolonialism and economic backwardness, tries to find a compromise solution that will both enhance its position as the new national bourgeoisie and develop an industrialized economy. Of course, one of the keys to achieving this end is the maintenance of tight control over the national economy. Nationalization provides the junta with two essential elements, capital and planning: appropriation of the means of production supplies the state with investment capital, while centralization holds out the opportunity to set policies whereby limited partnership or investment, under strict control, may be offered to foreign companies.

In this way a corporate state can begin to build up its strength without threatening its newly groomed ruling class. Due to their capacity for overall control and direction of the national economy, the "leftist juntas" like to call themselves socialist societies. They do this not out of ignorance but, rather, in a calculated attempt to make use of the growing mass appeal of the idea of *socialism* for their own purposes. It helps them to fend off revolutionary propaganda attacks within their own countries as well as to gain good will among the progressive peoples of the world. The good name of socialism suffers from this misuse and abuse.

As we have seen, these juntas, far from being socialist, are the offspring of imperialism; they are forms of state capitalism or, to use the term I prefer, corporate states, complete with capitalist social relations and, in most cases, a full-fledged market economy. Indeed, in many ways state capitalism, as practiced by the juntas, is worse than its traditional counterpart. Unlike the old bourgeois regimes, forged by years of struggle between state and people, the juntas are created suddenly, ex-

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plosively. The masses have no hand whatever in the shaping of the corporate state—which, once constituted, holds total power and dominates every aspect of society. There is no sign of the development of people's rights that has, historically, paralleled the rise of capitalism in other countries.

It is important to remember that bourgeois democracy, for all its shortcomings, is a forward step in human history; its failure to develop must thus be viewed with considerable alarm. And in fact, wherever the juntas have taken power, the abrogation of political liberties—e.g., the right to representation, to organize unions independent of the state, and to strike—has followed. Once again, this is done under the guise of "socialism." The juntas claim that in a workers' state the representation of workers outside the state system is superfluous; it can only serve the expression of "anti-socialist" sentiments. These governments bear no real resemblance to socialism; they make a mockery of it by working against the very ideals socialism strives to uphold.

Unfortunately, the left, especially in the West, tends to accept these pseudo-socialist regimes at face value, providing unqualified support instead of much-needed criticism. The primary lever through which the left gets sucked into such a false and damaging position seems to be anti-imperialism, a slogan the so-called leftist juntas often employ for propaganda purposes. Many of the corporate states do of course implement genuinely anti-imperialist policies; nevertheless, one cannot accept a nation as socialist on these grounds alone. Its internal social relations and class structure must also be taken into account.

And from this point of view, the corporate states' strategy—to industrialize through "defensive" capitalism, while nurturing a growing national bourgeoisie—far from being revolutionary, is being accomplished at immeasurable cost to the masses. The Third World is rapidly proliferating governments that neither have the people's interests at heart nor possess the ability to construct a rational society. Despite all the human and natural resources expended on mindless development schemes and social innovations, the "leftist juntas" have nowhere produced the desired results of economic development and social equality. Even in nations (Algeria, Iraq, Libya) where natural resources have provided immediate wealth, they have failed to make any

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praiseworthy changes. Moreover, they have increasingly discredited themselves by their continuing and growing reliance on the imperialist-dominated world market. Yet one of their principal alibis for the suppression of workers' and peasants' rights is the supposed exigencies of a "noncapitalist" road of development! The hollowness of such claims should be self-evident.

However much the juntas claim otherwise, a military state (whatever its ideological coloring) is unlikely to make much progress toward enhancing the well-being of the people; its main task will be to assist the nation in obtaining the most up-to-date military hardware it can afford. Arms are the goal of the military, as well as the yardstick by which it measures its achievements.

Since such states possess neither the scientific know-how nor the industrial capacity for producing advanced weaponry, once more they end up by enriching the multinational corporations. Except in the case of a few wealthy countries, arms are bought on credit, putting the nation into long-term debt. Quarterly payments and yearly interest charges empty the treasury and slow down any nascent efforts to industrialize the economy. And as new improved gadgets hit the market, the nation continues to buy in order to keep up in the arms race with its neighbors, thus falling deeper and deeper into debt and worsening its balance of payments. The money allocated to industrial development in those idealistic-sounding five-year plans is no longer available. And the masses are the ones who pay for these weapons with their sweat and blood—yet when they complain, they are attacked by the politicians and the press and physically threatened: some are jailed, others murdered.

All forms of political opposition, in fact, are suppressed. A constant campaign is waged to eliminate any authentic domestic radical movement, since the juntas regard the left as a greater danger to their authority than any other political force. Those who remain defiant are silenced in a manner that shows scant regard for their civil liberties. Military governments, indeed, are notorious for their overt acts of oppression and terror. They commit political crimes few civilian governments would risk. And on the left, groups embracing a broad range of oppositional

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strategies have this in common: they have found military governments, unlike their civilian counterparts, always ready for a fight. The juntas' willingness to do battle openly and by any means necessary has killed many a leftist insurrection in its infancy, often forcing revolutionaries into desperate terrorist activities. With the left's political strategy thrown into chaos, it is increasingly forced into a cloak-and-dagger existence, thus preventing it from functioning as an effective opposition.

Although some of these corporate states may go through the motions of democracy, even holding elections, rarely do they allow the revolutionary left to participate—if an opposition is openly tolerated at all, it tends to be a loyal one. Even in the absence of a strong opposition, moreover, the governing party leaves nothing to chance, routinely inflating its percentage of the vote with illegal ballots.

If the so-called leftist juntas offer some high-sounding reform programs, it is usually either in order to pre-empt the platform of the revolutionary left, or because the measures proposed accord with their own need to accumulate political and economic power. True, here and there one may find genuinely progressive military governments temporarily in power. But such rank-and-file-inspired military regimes are exceptional; their radicalism is born of a particular complex of social realities. Moreover, they never last more than a few weeks or months before they are taken over by officers and other professional manipulators who are totally uninterested in effecting any real change.

The usual criterion for assessing the radicalism of a reform government is the land question, since this is generally the central problem of the Third World. Thanks to the propaganda work of progressive forces, workers and peasants have come to expect the most radical reforms. A military government that has broken some ties with neocolonialism and expects to lose the support of certain sectors of the dependent (comprador) bourgeoisie has no choice but to woo the masses by promising to institute some basic reforms. In practice, however, when property changes hands—from the landlords to the state, say—it may very well be right in line with the organizational bourgeoisie's own class interest. But as far as the peasants are concerned, the

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shifting of landed property from one ruling class to another is hardly a cause for rejoicing; while for the workers the nationalization of industry is unlikely to improve their lot either.

It is for all these reasons that states controlled by "leftist juntas" must make use of the nationalistic feeling of the masses. They use nationalism as a weapon against the foreign interests they have expelled and brand opposition groups of any sort as allies of these imperialist villains. "My country, right or wrong" and other such jingoistic slogans are employed to sow confusion and keep the opposition at bay.

The only sense in which these states may be said to acknowledge their deviation from the radical principles they claim to practice is that they identify themselves as *particular brands* of socialism—"Arab socialism," "African socialism," "Ethiopian socialism," etc. What they lack is the courage to speak the truth: that they are a form of bourgeois state adapted to the age of imperialism.

Some of the policies espoused by the juntas—anti-imperialism, nationalization, and planning to bolster economic development—are not to be categorically denounced. As long as such reforms are implemented with complete awareness of their limitations, they warrant our support. The aspirations of these nations to develop at their own pace, without foreign domination of their means of production, are indeed worthy of praise. At times, the left may even be justified in going to their defense.

That is precisely why it is so important for the revolutionary and progressive forces of the world to have a clear understanding of these juntas, to be able to differentiate between their progressive and reactionary practices. While we may applaud and encourage some of their actions, we must at the same time condemn their suppression of free trade unions, peasant associations, and revolutionary parties. The right to self-expression must be stoutly defended.

The key is to strip the juntas of their "socialist" façade and reveal them for what they are. The crimes they have committed in the name of "socialism" have supplied the world-wide anti-communist movement with plenty of ammunition. If we attack the Chilean junta (as we should) for its oppressiveness, we must also raise our voices against those governments that

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make radical noises but commit the very same atrocities. Their abuse of the name of socialism should not be allowed to continue without strong and relentless protest.

NOTES

1. Henry Biemen, "State and Revolution: The Work of Amilcar Cabral," *Journal of Modern African Studies,* volume 15, no. 4 (December 1977).
2. James Petras, *Politics and Class Structure in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 132.
3. Be'en, quoted in Gavin Kennedy, *The Military in the Third World* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1974), p. 61.

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CORRESPONDENCE

WHY THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY IS NOT A NEW RULING CLASS

By Ernest Mandel

Paul Sweezy has finally started to discuss the Marxist tradition —which, he acknowledges, is by and large represented by Trotskyism—with regard to the Russian Revolution and its subsequent fate. True, he still rejects that interpretation. But he is at least ready to discuss it, and his first comments contained in MONTHLY REVIEW (October 1978) are of a provisional nature. By answering them on the main challenges they raise, we hope to be able to contribute to a constructive debate—both with Paul Sweezy, the editors of MONTHLY REVIEW, and the readers of that magazine—about what remains a key issue for the future of the international labor movement.

Sweezy takes us to task for repeating—forty years after Trotsky's analysis of 1939—the thesis that the Soviet Union's fate and, therefore, the question of the nature of the bureaucracy isn't settled yet. Trotsky, Sweezy claims, made sense because he posed the question in a short-term perspective. Mandel, he continues, just repeats Trotsky without realizing that the very time-scale he is talking about undermines the credibility of the theory.

Ernest Mandel is the author of two MR Press books: *Marxist Economic Theory* (2 vols.) and *Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx.*

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The point Sweezy seems to miss is that what is involved in the problems Trotsky posed was not a question of time-scale, but the basic trends of development of the contemporary world. This becomes clear if we reproduce again the two key passages from Trotsky's article "The USSR in War," quoted by Sweezy:

If, however, it is conceded that the present war will provoke not revolution but a decline of the proletariat, then there remains another alternative: the further decay of monopoly capitalism, its further fusion with the state and the replacement of democracy wherever it still remained by a totalitarian regime. The inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead under these conditions to the growth of a new exploiting class from the Bonapartist fascist bureaucracy.

And again:

If contrary to all probabilities the October Revolution fails during the course of the present war, or immediately thereafter, to find its continuation in any of the advanced countries; and if, on the contrary, the proletariat is thrown back everywhere and on all fronts—then we should doubtlessly have to revise our conceptions of the present epoch and its driving forces. In that case it would be a question not of slapping a copybook label on the USSR or the Stalinist gang but of re-evaluating the world historic perspective for the next decades if not centuries: Have we entered the epoch of social revolution and socialist society, or on the contrary the epoch of the declining society of totalitarian bureaucracy?

Now, Sweezy stresses, there has been no new victory of a proletarian revolution in an advanced country, either in the course of the Second World War or immediately thereafter. This is undoubtedly true. But Sweezy forgets the second part of the question posed by Trotsky: Has there been a "decline of the proletariat"? In numbers? In skill? In levels of organization or militancy? How can one argue such a thesis after May 1968, which saw three times as many strikers occupying factories in France as in the previous record level of June 1936? After autumn 1969 in Italy, which saw eight times as many workers occupying factories as in the famous strike wave of November 1920? After the first six months of 1976 in Spain, which saw three times as many strikers as at the height of the revolution in 1936? This is besides Britain, Japan, the smaller European countries, Portugal, and elsewhere, where the working-class struggles in the last decade have far outdistanced their highest prewar levels.

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Has the proletariat been "thrown back everywhere and on all fronts"? Has (bourgeois) democracy, wherever it still remained in 1939-40, been replaced by a totalitarian regime? Again, obviously not. So it is not out of routinism or exaggerated respect for "the master" that we still stick to the terms of Trotsky's 1939 thesis. We come to this conclusion because we base ourselves upon a sober balance sheet of what has happened in the last forty years.

Indeed, the question of the secular trend is and remains that posed by Trotsky in his 1939 article. However, the time-scale was obviously wrong. And because of this, an "intermediary" variant was left out, which explains precisely *why* the question has not yet been decided by history. There *was* a rise of world revolution during and after the Second World War. There *was* an upsurge and not a further decline of working-class struggles. But because of the effects on the average consciousness of the working class of twenty years of defeats of revolution, this rise was only *partial* and it could therefore be channeled in the main by political force of, or originating from, the bureaucracies of the traditional labor movement (British Labor Party, French, Italian, Greek Communist parties, Titoism, Maoism, etc.).

In some semi-colonial countries this did not prevent new victorious socialist revolutions, even if they were bureaucratically distorted from the start (Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam). In the imperialist countries on the other hand, where the bourgeoisie is much more powerful and hence a much higher level of consciousness and leadership of the proletariat are necessary for a revolutionary victory, it led to the emasculation of the anti-capitalist potential of the mass struggles, but not without the working class having gained new and important reforms inside bourgeois society, and having prevented the bourgeoisie from resorting to open dictatorships.

For reasons we cannot go into here, there then followed a new period of accelerated economic growth in the imperialist countries, leading to a new growth of the proletariat. This in turn laid the basis for a new revolutionary potential in the West—the May 1968 explosion being its first expression. In other words, there was no "retreat of the proletariat on all fronts" but a rise, insufficient to overthrow capitalism, but sufficient to prevent a slide into "the declining society of totalitarian bureaucracy." But after the "long wave of expansion" of postwar capitalism, the turn of the late 1960s relentlessly inaugurated a new period of profound and prolonged crisis which restates the problem in Trotsky's terms.

Let us add that Trotsky's 1939 article was only a first sketch of the historical perspective in relation to the Second World War.

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In a more programmatic document—his real political testament—"The Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International" (May 1940), Trotsky poses the problem of the time-scale in a much more realistic way:

> Will not the revolution be betrayed this time too, inasmuch as there are two Internationals in the service of imperialism, while the genuine revolutionary elements constitute a tiny minority? . . . In order to answer this question correctly, it is necessary to pose it correctly. Naturally, this or that uprising may end and surely will end in defeat, owing to the immaturity of the revolutionary leadership. But it is not the question of a single uprising. It is the question of an entire revolutionary epoch.
>
> It is necessary to prepare for long years, if not decades, of war, uprisings, brief interludes of truce, new wars, and new uprisings. A young revolutionary party must base itself on this perspective. History will provide it with enough opportunities and possibilities to test itself, to accumulate experience, and to mature. (*Documents of the Fourth International,* pp. 345-346)

In that sense, the postwar time-scale Sweezy opposes to Trotsky's thesis, is the very one in which Trotsky envisaged it in a more programmatic and less propagandistic formulation of the question. But, one may ask, what has all this to do with the class nature of the Soviet bureaucracy? In answering this, we are at the historical heart of "Trotskyism," i.e., contemporary revolutionary Marxism. Workers and poor peasants, Trotskyism holds, should take power wherever the opportunity presents itself. In the epoch of imperialism the opportunity might present itself in a less developed country before it occurs in the more advanced ones. But the taking of power (and the suppression of private ownership of the means of production) is only *one necessary but in and of itself insufficient precondition* for the building of socialism. This process can only be successfully achieved on an international scale. (It should of course be *initiated* wherever power is wrung from the capitalists.)

Stalinism, the victory of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, is the result of *partial* defeats of world revolution. World revolution did not spread to the advanced countries. But neither was it defeated to the point where capitalism could be restored in the Soviet Union (the imperialists tried hard to achieve that, in 1918-21, in 1941-44, and again, although less directly, in 1948-51). The final fate of the USSR depends upon the outcome of the world-wide struggle between capital and labor. If the world proletariat is decisively defeated, then the bureaucracy will become a ruling

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class (whether a new one or a capitalist one is another question). If, on the other hand, the socialist revolution triumphs in the West or the political revolution triumphs in Eastern Europe, then it will not take the Soviet proletariat long to overthrow bureaucratic rule in the USSR before the bureaucracy has had the chance to become such a ruling class.

We stress: "or the political revolution triumphs in Eastern Europe." For Sweezy's other argument—the idea that the working class of the Stalinist countries accepts the regime, albeit grudgingly —is contradicted by spectacular events to which he does not refer at all: the workers' uprising in the German Democratic Republic of 1953, the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the Prague spring of 1968, and the repeated mass uprisings of the Polish workers. Indeed, has not the "abstract" idea of political revolution, put forward by Trotsky and the Fourth International some 45 years ago, been given a real "concrete" content by these historic events?

II

The hypothesis that the Soviet bureaucracy is a new ruling class does not correspond to a serious analysis of the real development and the real contradictions of Soviet society and economy in the last fifty years. Such a hypothesis must imply, from the point of view of historical materialism, that a new exploitative mode of production has emerged in that country. If this were so, we would be confronted, for the first time in history, with a "ruling class" whose general behavior and private interests (which of course dictate that behavior) run counter to the needs and inner logic of the existing socio-economic system. Indeed, one of the main characteristics of the Soviet economy is the impossibility of reconciling the needs of planning, of optimizing economic growth (not from an "absolute" point of view, but from within the logic of the system itself) with the material self-interest of the bureaucracy.

All the successive economic reforms introduced in the USSR under the bureaucracy—from the re-introduction of enterprise-based cost accountancy (*khozrazhot*) under Stalin, to Khrushchev's *sovnarkhoz* experiment, to Liberman's projected use of profit as an indicator for overall economic performance, to Kosygin's introduction of "mixed indicators" for measuring that performance—have been designed to overcome that contradiction, but without lasting success. One can easily explain this apparent paradox by stressing the parasitic nature of the bureaucracy which acts contrary to the logic of the system. One can also add that *social* planning can function smoothly only under management by associated producers,

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materially interested in a "social dividend" and not in separate distinctive gains which pit factory against factory, town against town, branch against branch, and region against region. But all this precisely implies that the bureaucracy—which seeks such particular gains—is not a new ruling class, running a self-reproducing new mode of production, but a cancer on a society in transition between capitalism and socialism. Bureaucratic management is not only increasingly wasteful. It also prevents the system of the planned economy, based upon socialized property, from operating effectively. And this undeniable fact is in itself incompatible with the characterization of the bureaucracy as a ruling class and with the USSR as a new "exploitative mode of production" whose "laws of motion" have never been specified.

In the second place, we would be confronted, again for the *first time in history, with a ruling class without the capacity to* perpetuate itself through the operation of the socio-economic system itself. There is no guarantee for a bureaucrat that he or she will remain a bureaucrat. There is even less guarantee that his or her sons and daughters will remain bureaucrats. We agree that vertical mobility in Soviet society—one of the main social safety valves under Stalin—has significantly decreased during the last decades. The "gerontocracy" of the Presidium is symbolic of what is happening in all Soviet society. The "security of tenure" of the bureaucrats has undoubtedly increased. But this only leads to increasing social tension (e.g., pressure for access to higher education), and not to a real solution to the problem of the bureaucrats' inability to guarantee the permanence of their position of power and privilege. Moreover, these positions continue to be tied essentially to particular functions and depend upon political decisions (e.g., the famous *nomenklatura*) and not to a specific role in the process of social production. Hence the bureaucrats' pressure to obtain *permanent* ties with specific factories, enterprises, trusts (i.e., to restore private property in the economic sense of the word before restoring it in the juridical sense). Hence the consistent pressure of large layers of the bureaucracy to gain a qualitatively higher degree of autonomy at factory or branch level (i.e., to escape the iron framework of a centralized plan). Hence their tendency toward private capital accumulation, through bribes, corruption, "grey" and black market operations, hoarding of foreign currency and gold, etc. Hence also the trend towards a growing "symbiosis" with their counterparts in the West, including the establishment of bank accounts in Western banks (especially visible in the "Peoples' Democracies").

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All this points in the direction of the *potential* emergence of a "new ruling class"—not a "new one" but a good old capitalist one, based upon private property. But before this process can come to fruition, two formidable obstacles have to be overcome: the resistance of the working class, which would tend to lose in the course of such a restoration that which it values most in the present set-up (in fact, probably the only thing which it values): guaranteed job security, i.e., the right to work, full employment, and, flowing from that, a much less hectic work tempo than in the West; and the resistance of key sectors of the state apparatus (note the way Tito clamped down upon the Yugoslav "billionaires" in the early seventies, when the danger of "restoration" became real). So to say that a new ruling class exists and rules misreads the real social struggles occurring in these countries. It assumes as already decided in the past a struggle whose outcome is still open.

In the third place, we would be confronted, likewise for the first time in history, with a "ruling class" representative of a "mode of production" whose "overthrow" would leave the basic economic structure intact. In a well-known passage of volume 3 of *Capital*, Marx writes that each mode of production is characterized by a *specific form of appropriation of the social surplus product*. Now in the USSR, the social surplus product is appropriated in a dual form: in the form of use values, inasmuch as it is composed in its major part of additional equipment and raw materials; and in the form of commodities, inasmuch as it is composed in its minor part of luxury goods (and special services) bought by the bureaucracy with its privileged income. But after the overthrow of the bureaucratic dictatorship, this dual form of appropriation of the social surplus product would not change—if only because the Soviet workers will certainly not transform the means of production into commodities (which would mean restoring capitalism!); but they will also be unable to suppress the commodity aspect of the nature of consumer goods rapidly (a new revolution in the USSR would not permit the building of socialism in one country). Likewise, neither the suppression of the private ownership of the means of production, nor centralized planning, nor the state monopoly of foreign trade would be changed by such a revolution (which we therefore prefer to call a political one). If one assembles all these factors, one obviously gets an economic structure which remains basically unchanged.

True, there will be a radical change in the *modus operandi* of the system. The mass of producers will get a decisive say about what is produced and how it should be produced. Social inequality

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will be radically reduced. The enormous waste caused by bureaucratic mismanagement will cease. The organization of work and its hierarchical structure will be radically overhauled. But the above-sketched structure itself—the specific form of appropriation of the social surplus product—remains basically the same.

In the fourth place, the hypothesis of the bureaucracy's being a new ruling class leads to the conclusion that, for the first time in history, we are confronted with a "ruling class" *which does not exist as a class* before it actually rules. Where does it come from? Sweezy answers: "The new exploiting class develops out of the conditions created by the revolution itself." But this really begs the question. Social classes are groups of human beings engaged in specific relations emanating from the process of production ("relations of production"). Social transformations can transform them; but they cannot create them *ex nihilo.* In reality, a consistent theory of a "new exploiting class" in the Soviet Union only makes sense if one assumes that sectors of the working class (the labor bureaucracy and labor aristocracy) and of the intelligentsia (the petty bourgeoisie and higher state functionaries) were *potentially* a new ruling class even before they "take power," i.e., before "the revolution."* But formidable consequences, involving practically all aspects of the contemporary class struggle throughout the world, and a revision of all the constituent elements of Marxist theory, arise from such an assumption. And without that assumption, the notion of a "new ruling class" having arisen "out of the historical process" becomes utterly absurd—after all, the bureaucracy took *power;* how can a "non-existent" social layer take power?

III

The idea that the Soviet bureaucracy (like the trade-union bureaucracy in the West) has not cut its umbilical cord with the working class, and that its specific interests and political decisions can be seen within the framework of that special—parasitic—relationship with the proletariat, leads to the conclusion that the class

* The bureaucracy's taking of power does not simply "develop out of the conditions created by the revolution itself"—a statement which avoids taking a stand on the concrete political struggles which occurred during the twenties in the USSR! It develops out of *a victorious political counter-revolution* (a "counter-revolution within the revolution," if one wishes, the classical precedent being the Thermidor during the French Revolution). In light of that fact, Sweezy does the Left Opposition a serious injustice in not mentioning that it started as early as 1923—perhaps a couple of years too late, granted—a consistent struggle for Soviet democracy and increased political rights for the working class.

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struggle in the capitalist countries continues to be a bi-polar process: capital versus labor (with the bureaucracy operating by and large as "labor lieutenants of capital").

The idea that the Soviet bureaucracy is a new ruling class and the unavoidable conclusion that the Communist parties not in power can be seen—at least so far as their central apparatuses are concerned—as the nucleus of a potential new exploiting class, implies of necessity the complete revision of that way of looking at the whole of twentieth-century history. The class struggle now becomes a tri-polar affair: capital versus labor versus the potential "new exploiting class."

This is not simply a question of modifying historical analysis (which in and of itself would already be hair-raising and, at least so far as the evidence we possess is concerned, an impossible task). It has political implications of the greatest and gravest magnitude. We are then left only with the choice between two evils, both of which lead to conclusions which would pit consistent advocates of the theory of a "new exploiting class" squarely against the struggle of the international working class for emancipation. For there are indeed only two possible ways of looking at that alleged new "exploiting class." Either it is, globally and essentially, progressive compared to the capitalist class, i.e., it stands in the same relation to the bourgeoisie as the bourgeoisie stood toward the semi-feudal aristocracy before and during the bourgeois revolutions. Such a hypothesis would of course be perfectly consistent with a sharp critique of its exploitative character. But it would mean that in all straightforward conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the "potential new class," one would have to give the same kind of "critical support" to the "new class" which the *Communist Manifesto* envisages for the revolutionary bourgeoisie. And one would then have to restrict —at least partially, if not completely—anti-bureaucratic struggles of the working class so as not to hinder the victory of the "progressive" bureaucracy over the reactionary bourgeoisie.

The very idea of a socialist revolution and a conquest of power by the working class would become at least questionable. Granted: one could say that decadent capitalism could lead either to socialism or to the establishment of a new class system, progressive compared to capitalism. But in that case all victorious revolutions which have occurred up till now would then have to be re-characterized as "bureaucratic revolutions" and not proletarian ones. Then, the allegation that the idea of a direct transition from capitalism to socialism was a utopian conceptual error by Marx and Marxists alike would become rather credible, to say the least.

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If the "new ruling class" is progressive compared to capitalism, this would imply that class society, contrary to what Marx thought, had not exhausted its progressive potential with the rise of capitalism; that a new and momentous development of the productive forces—leading in the long run to a broader development of the "social individual," i.e., of human freedom—was still possible without abolishing class society. Socialism would then become merely a moral preference, not a historical necessity to avoid barbarism and the decline of human civilization.

So, although starting by damning the bureaucracy as new exploiters, bloodsuckers, deadly enemies of the working class and of human freedom, etc., etc.—and, undoubtedly, 99 percent of the *real* motivation for any self-proclaimed Marxist's calling the bureaucracy a new ruling class stems from such understandable moral indignation rather than cool scientific analysis—one would paradoxically end up by historically justifying that very same bureaucracy, if not becoming a straightforward apologist for all its crimes.

This is not accidental. Within the conceptual framework of classical Marxism, classes—including ruling classes—are at least at some time of their existence historically inevitable, i.e., necessary instruments of social organization. If the Soviet bureaucracy is a new ruling class, and progressive compared to the bourgeoisie, then the conclusion is unassailable: it has played, at least temporarily, a necessary and progressive role in Soviet society. So, after a long detour, one would end where one started. Granted: the *Gulag* isn't so good, the harshest labor code in the world was rather unpalatable, but was there really any choice? After all, Russia had to be industrialized and modernized, and one cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs—one could only overcome backwardness by barbaric means. Yesterday "we" called that building socialism "by barbaric means." Today "we" call it building a new class society in advance of capitalism "by barbaric means." But today, as yesterday, "we" have to "objectively" approve of the bureaucracy—all its despotic crimes notwithstanding—as "historically necessary." And so on *ad nauseam.*

That pitfall is easily avoided by the Marxist, i.e., Trotskyist, interpretation of Soviet history and the role of the bureaucracy. Everything which is progressive about the development of Russia, China, etc., is the product of a *socialist* revolution. Everything which is reactionary is the product of the rule of the bureaucracy. There is no logical intermeshing but a glaring contradiction between the two. This implies that the bureaucracy is not a class but a parasitic cancer on the proletariat's body; that Soviet society is

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not a new despotic mode of production, but a society in transition between capitalism and socialism, arrested in its progressive development—bogged down, frozen—by a bureaucratic dictatorship, which has to be overthrown to reopen the road toward socialism.

But if the assumption that the bureaucracy, as a new exploiting ruling class, is a progressive one compared to the bourgeoisie leads to grave conclusions, the assumption that it is reactionary compared to the capitalists has implications ten times worse. It would mean that when confronted with a conflict between the "new class," or the potential "new class," and the bourgeoisie, one would have to give critical support to the latter against the former.

IV

If bourgeois society has not led and does not lead—at least in the foreseeable future—to proletarian revolutions but to "bureaucratic" ones; if in a dozen countries not a workers' state (be it a heavily bureaucratized one) but a new despotic class society has replaced capitalism, then, obviously, there was something basically wrong with the historical projections and perspectives of Marx and the classical Marxists. Moreover, there was obviously something basically wrong with their social, economic, and political analysis of bourgeois society itself, of the nature of its inner contradictions and especially of the nature of *the modern proletariat.*

Marx's concept of socialism—which was shared by nearly all socialists until the late 1920s—was that of a free society of associated producers developed out of the specific economic, social, political, cultural, and even psychological characteristics of the working class (the wage-earning class), sketched in the *Communist Manifesto* and further refined in the subsequent writings of Marx and Engels on the subject.

If one believes that capitalism could lead to a new class society as well as—or, rather, instead of—socialism, that the working class could itself throw up such a new "exploiting ruling class" rather than lead the process of general human emancipation, then the question arises: Wasn't that analysis of the revolutionary and liberating potential of the modern working class completely wrong from the start? Not a few theoreticians have gone far in that direction, Baran-Sweezy's last chapter of *Monopoly Capital* being one of the first and most notable efforts along that road. Recently, the East German oppositional communist Rudolf Bahro has tarnished his otherwise impressive book *The Alternative*—by far the most thorough Marxist critique which has come out of a country dominated by the Stalinist bureaucracy since Trotsky's *The Revo-*

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lution Betrayed—by an even more outspoken and synthetic judgment of this kind: "The proletariat struggles spontaneously only in order to adopt the way of life of the bourgeoisie, at least of the petty bourgeoisie which is nearest to it." Herbert Marcuse, as one could have expected, of course expresses his enthusiastic agreement with that judgment.

Let us not dwell on the question whether such a rejection of the classical Marxist analysis of the working class—the Western one as well as the Soviet one—does or does not imply that socialism and a classless society have become impossible. The various attempts to find a substitute "revolutionary subject" to replace the modern proletariat—Third World peasants, revolutionary students, the intelligentsia, or even marginalized paupers—fail to take into account what was the main advance that Marx achieved for the socialist movement: that the nature of the society to be created is at least correlated with the social nature, the economic power, the sociopolitical potential, and the material interests of the "revolutionary subject," and not to the degree of moral indignation and individual rebellion against the existing order of this or that group of people. One cannot demonstrate how any of the above-mentioned social *strata* could develop any of the necessary material and social conditions for bringing about a truly classless society to a higher degree than the modern working class. But is it true that 150 years of class struggle of the modern proletariat (leaving aside the hunger revolts of the earliest stages, which Bahro correctly exempts from his analysis and characterization) can be subsumed in the formula of tending "spontaneously . . . only to adopt the bourgeois—or petty bourgeois—way of life"?

How blind one must be to the rich, manifold, and passionate history of working-class struggles, where chapters of drab "conformism" stand side by side with chapters of breath-taking capacity of imagination, of daring innovation, of unequaled heroism, to make such an unwarranted generalization! Were the workers of the Paris Commune, the revolutionary workers of Russia in 1917-21, of Germany in 1918-23, of Spain in 1936-37, of Yugoslavia in 1941-45, of Hungary in October-November 1956, of Cuba in 1959-65, of France in May 1968, of Prague in 1968-69, of Italy in autumn 1969, of Portugal in 1975, of Iran in 1979, just "spontaneously tending to adopt the life-style of the bourgeoisie"? And again: Were the workers of Spain in 1975-76—where for the first time in history we witnessed, in the face of an *intact* fascist repressive apparatus, several *political* regional general strikes for that typical "bourgeois life-style demand," the defense and liberation of polit-

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ical prisoners—behaving according to Bahro's precepts? And these are just the most outstanding examples which come to mind. One could add dozens of other examples to this list—quite a few from American working-class history too.

In face of that real picture of working-class struggle over the last century or so, in face of the overwhelming historical evidence, the question, "Why hasn't there been a victorious socialist revolution in the West?" has to be reformulated in its historically correct way: Why has there *not yet* been such a victory, *in spite* of the proletariat's periodic spontaneous attempts to reconstruct society along socialist lines—attempts which obviously confirm the possibility of such victory? Then the answer has to be looked for in terms of the difficulty of the enterprise, the role of the subjective factor, the need to have a revolutionary leadership, the uneven development of proletarian class consciousness, the role of a deliberate brake played by social democracy first (Germany 1918-19), the Stalinist parties later (Spain 1936-37), i.e., the real historical dialectic of the objective and subjective preconditions for world socialism, which can only come about as a conscious enterprise by a society objectively and materially capable of realizing it. There is no force of this kind in bourgeois society other than the modern proletariat.

Marxists are not religious people. Our conviction about the revolutionary potential of the proletariat is based upon scientific analysis and careful checking of the historical record—not on irrational faith or scholastic syllogisms. If overwhelming historical evidence would show that Marx's assumptions have been proven wrong, then one would have no choice but to state the truth—in the true spirit of Marx himself who, not only as a witticism, stated that his favorite motto was *de omnibus dubitandum.*

But we contend that the evidence provided by history so far does not warrant any such hasty generalization. *It is both Western capitalism and the dictatorship of the bureaucracy which are in deep and insoluble social crisis today—not Marxism.* If one wants to avoid retreating into a simple rationalization of one's own disappointment with the relative slowness of the historical process, of one's revulsion against political misleaders, of one's fatigue and demoralization, then one should keep a sense of proportion and say: let us wait and see how the workers will fight the next few decades, nay half-century. And let us not wait passively but do what we can to ensure that these workers' struggles end in victorious socialist revolution, before drawing premature balance-sheets and before barbarism takes over.

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We are back where we started, but with a vengeance. Yes, the question of whether the Soviet bureaucracy is a new ruling class is directly linked with the question of the future of world revolution and, therefore, the future of humanity. It is likewise directly related to the question of the revolutionary socialist potential of the working class, to the very possibility of socialism, i.e., to scientific socialism as such. For these questions are at the very center of Marx's analysis and of the "Marxist system." And there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that this system is no longer as solid and firmly based as it ever was.

PAUL SWEEZY REPLIES TO ERNEST MANDEL

My original article bore the title "Is There a Ruling Class in the USSR?" and Ernest Mandel answers it under the title "Why the Soviet Bureaucracy Is Not a Ruling Class." He begins by arguing that my utilization of Trotsky's 1939 piece ("The USSR in War") is based on too narrow an interpretation of the views Trotsky held at that time. His "real political testament," according to Mandel, was "The Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International" of May 1940, in which Trotsky envisaged a period of "long years, if not decades" of wars and uprisings during which the proletariat would prepare itself to take power and establish socialism, presumably on a Europe-wide scale. So the fact that forty years have passed without a proletarian revolution in the West is not really significant.

Mandel then concedes, however, that one might ask, "What has all this to do with the class nature of the Soviet bureaucracy?" I was wondering myself, so I was naturally interested in the answer. He proceeds: "Here we are at the historical heart of 'Trotskyism,' i.e., contemporary revolutionary Marxism." This rather large claim could be disputed, but that would divert us from the question before us: What *has* it got to do with the class nature of the

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Soviet bureaucracy? Mandel's answer is essentially to repeat what has already been said or clearly implied:

> If the world proletariat is decisively defeated, then the bureaucracy will become a ruling class. . . . If, on the other hand, the socialist revolution triumphs in the West or the political revolution triumphs in Eastern Europe, then it will not take the Soviet proletariat long to overthrow bureaucratic rule in the USSR before the bureaucracy has had the chance to become such a ruling class.

But I'm afraid this only begs the question. My argument is that, however one may evaluate the working-class struggles in the West in the post-Second World War period (and I certainly wouldn't deny their importance), the more than half a century that has elapsed since the October Revolution has been more than ample time for the "bureaucracy" to become such a ruling class and that it has actually done so.

The basic question, it seems to me, is this: Under capitalism—and with appropriate modifications the same can be said of other systems in which the means of production are privately owned—the ruling class is composed of (substantial) property-owners (the bourgeoisie). The state, for all the "relative autonomy" so dear to the hearts of some of our more advanced theorists, "belongs" to this ruling class; its basic function is to safeguard, by whatever means may be available and necessary (concessions, coercion, persuasion, etc.), this particular property system and class rule.* Comes the revolution, followed by the abolition of private property in the means of production. The bourgeoisie disappears (not without a struggle of course). To whom does the state now "belong"? To borrow Marx's famous formulation, "These are the conditions of the problem. Hic Rhodus, hic salta!"**

First possible answer: The state now belongs to the proletariat —all the more plausible if, as in the case of Russia, the proletariat was the leading class in making the revolution. If this answer is

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* To perform this function the state must always own some property of its own, and the amount so owned can vary enormously according to circumstances and depending on what the ruling class judges to be useful or necessary in preserving the system as a whole.

** To quote the editor's footnote in the recent Penguin translation (by Ben Fowkes) of *Capital,* volume 1: "This is the reply made, in one of Aesop's fables, to a boaster who claimed he had once made an immense leap in Rhodes. 'Rhodes is here. Leap here and now.' But it is also a reference to the preface to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right,* where he uses the quotation to illustrate his view that the task of philosophy is to apprehend and comprehend what is, rather than what ought to be." (p. 269)

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given, it of course leads to the conclusion that the proletariat is the new ruling class. And this was indeed official Soviet doctrine for many years, until it was decreed that class antagonisms no longer existed in the Soviet Union and that henceforth the state was "the state of all the people." There is no need, I think, to dwell on the absurdity of this official doctrine, but it does have the merit of showing that one cannot automatically deduce the character of the post-revolutionary state from the character of the revolution which brought it into being. How then should we go about discovering whether the state belongs to the proletariat? Clearly, there is no simple answer, and this is not the occasion to attempt to analyze the complexities of the problem. But I think it is not difficult to formulate certain conditions which would be necessary, even if not sufficient, for an affirmative conclusion. At the very least, workers would have to be free to learn about and discuss the problems affecting their lives, and to organize economically and politically to bring collective influence to bear on each other and on the organs of the state. Where these freedoms are totally absent, as in the USSR, the state obviously does *not* belong to the proletariat.

Second possible answer: The state belongs to those who staff its various branches and apparatuses, commonly referred to (not only in the Trotskyist tradition) as the "bureaucracy." There is a trivial sense in which this is a mere truism, and the loose way many writers use the term "bureaucracy" often invites this interpretation. Mandel gets around this by defining the bureaucracy "to include . . . all the layers in Soviet society that are privileged in one way or another," going on to note that this means that

> we are talking about millions of people: between five and ten million, if not more. This total would include the entire trade union bureaucracy; the whole officer corps of the armed forces, not just the generals and marshals but also the junior officers; the entire hierarchy of production, not just the directors but also the engineers; and the great majority of the intelligentsia (except teachers, who are paid less than workers and have no material privileges). ("On the Nature of the Soviet State," *New Left Review,* no. 108 [March-April 1978], p. 40)

Now, I have no doubt that those who control the Soviet state are to be found among the privileged layers of the society, but I fail to see what sense it makes to lump together all these heterogeneous groups—undoubtedly riddled with conflicts of interest over sharing the privileges—into a collectivity called the "bureaucracy" which is supposed to play the role assigned to it by Mandel's theory.

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If one were to reply that these groups act through the party to control the state, one would have to show that there is some systematic connection between them and the party such as would exist, for example, if party members were elected on the basis of a franchise in effect limited to the privileged layers. But of course no such connection exists: the party is a self-reproducing organization which at no time has been subjected, either in theory or in practice, to any form of outside control. If the party nevertheless can be said to "represent" the privileged layers, it does so out of its own choice and in its own way; it certainly cannot be said to be their instrument. Under the circumstances I cannot see that Mandel's broadening of the concept of bureaucracy provides us with a meaningful concept of bureaucratic rule.

Third possible answer: The Soviet state is controlled by a ruling class in the same sense but not in the same way that the capitalist state is controlled by a ruling class. This is the position for which I argued in the article to which Mandel's reply is directed; but I made no effort there to develop the argument, limiting myself to pointing out what seem to me to be the fatal weaknesses of the position originally put forward by Trotsky and defended by Mandel in the *New Left Review* piece quoted above, i.e., that the USSR is ruled by a bureaucracy which, objectively speaking, is acting as a stand-in for the proletariat. If the proletariat is manifestly not the ruling class and rule by "bureaucracy" is either a trivial or a meaningless concept, then the only alternative is that there is a new ruling class in the Soviet Union.

I cannot attempt here, any more than I could in the original article, to explore this question in detail. I will only note that it has two aspects, one theoretical and one empirical. We need a carefully articulated theory of class which goes beyond the familiar Marxian view (the formulation here is Lenin's) that "classes are large groups of people distinguished by the place they occupy in an historically defined system of social production, by their relation . . . vis-à-vis the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and by the modes of obtaining and the importance of the share of social wealth of which they dispose." The theory needs also to encompass at least the following: the formation of classes in conflict with other classes, the character and degree of their self-consciousness, their internal organizational structures, the ways in which they generate and utilize ideologies to further their interests, and their modes of reproduction and self-perpetuation. And the empirical task of course is to use the theory as the basis for collecting and analyzing the avail-

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able material on class formation and class struggles in the USSR since the October Revolution.

It seems, however, that these are not the kind of problems which interest Mandel. The point of his arguments, if I understand him correctly, is rather to show that if we start off with the assumption that there is a ruling class in the Soviet Union, we necessarily land ourselves in a morass of illogicalities and confusions. If, he says, we were to accept the hypothesis that there is a new ruling class in the USSR and hence that a new exploitative mode of production has emerged in that country, "we would be confronted, for the first time in history, with a 'ruling class' whose general behavior and private interests . . . run counter to the needs and inner logic of the existing socio-economic system."

I find this a very strange way for a Marxist to argue. Haven't Marxists always maintained that the most general contradiction of capitalism is between private appropriation (the behavior and private interests of capitalists) and increasingly socialized production (the inner logic of the system)? What else was Marx trying to say when he wrote:

> *The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself.* It is the fact that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and closing point, as the motive and aim of production; that production is merely production for *capital,* and not vice versa, the means of production mere means for an ever expanding system of the life process for the benefit of the *society* of producers. The barriers within which the preservation and self-expansion of the value of capital resting on the expropriation and pauperization of the great mass of producers can alone move, these barriers come continually in collision with the methods of production which capital must employ for its purposes and which steer straight toward an unrestricted extension of production, toward production for its own self, toward an unconditional development of the productive forces of society. The means, this unconditional development of the productive forces of society, comes continually into conflict with the limited end, the self-expansion of the existing capital. Thus while the capitalist mode of production is one of the historical means by which the material forces of production are developed and the world market required for them created, it is at the same time in continual conflict with this historical task and the conditions of social production corresponding to it. (*Capital,* Kerr ed., vol. 3, p. 293)

Thus the Soviet example is certainly not "the first time in history" that the behavior of a ruling class has been in conflict

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with the logic of the system over which it presides. To which I have to add immediately, however, that the way Mandel characterizes this conflict in the Soviet case makes no sense at all to me. I have no idea what he is talking about when he alleges "the impossibility of reconciling the needs of planning, of optimizing economic growth (not from an 'absolute' point of view, but from within the logic of the system itself) with the material self-interest of the bureaucracy." The reason is not that I am unable to attach any meaning to the notion of the material interests of the privileged layers (Mandel's definition of the bureaucracy) but that I have never seen—and Mandel certainly doesn't provide—a coherent account of the "logic of the system itself." He seems to assume that this "logic" can be deduced from the facts of state ownership of the means of production and centralized economic planning and that all the problems and troubles of the system stem from the "bureaucracy's" selfish failure to follow the logic. It follows of course that if only "bureaucratic management" were replaced by Mandel's version of worker management, all problems and contradictions would automatically disappear (this idea underlies or is implicit in not a few of Mandel's arguments). If only things were so simple!

To this highly abstract way of looking at the Soviet system should be counterposed another, which I think is both more realistic and more conducive to fruitful scientific investigation, i.e., that state ownership and centralized planning do not give rise to any specific "logic" but are quite compatible with radically differing social formations, one of which is class-dominated and class-exploitative while the other is socialist in the sense of moving toward eliminating precisely these features, both of which characterize the pre-revolutionary society and have a strong tendency to reproduce themselves in new forms after the revolution.

Two of Mandel's arguments can be dealt with briefly: his contention that if one assumes the existence of a ruling class in the USSR it would be "again for the first time in history, . . . a ruling class without the capacity to perpetuate itself through the operation of the socio-economic system itself"; and his insistence (another historical first*) that it would be a ruling class "whose

* By repeating this theme of historical firsts Mandel seems to be implying that any argument that assumes or implies that something is happening "for the first time in history" is *ipso facto* suspect, if not patently invalid. I would argue, on the contrary, that important (as well as trivial) historical firsts are a common occurrence and that one should always be on the lookout for them.

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'overthrow' would leave the basic economic structure intact." The second point follows in syllogistic fashion from identifying the basic economic structure with state ownership and economic planning plus the implied assumption that except in the case of open counter-revolution those doing the overthrowing would not abandon these features of the existing system. Here then we have merely a repetition in a new form of a theme which permeates Mandel's thinking, viz., the primacy of the form of property in determining the overall character of social formations. Others, of whom I count myself as one, would argue that overthrow of the Soviet ruling class could result only from profound social upheavals which would change the very meaning of state property and leave the basic economic structure anything but intact.

The point about the Soviet ruling class's ability to perpetuate itself, however, is undoubtedly of crucial importance. I would even go so far as to say that self-reproduction is an *essential* characteristic of a class as distinct from a mere stratum. I would therefore have to agree with Mandel that there is no ruling class in the USSR if it could be shown that the ruling group lacks this characteristic. But the only evidence he offers is that "there is no guarantee for a bureaucrat that he or she will remain a bureaucrat. There is even less guarantee that his or her sons and daughters will remain bureaucrats." True enough, but I must remind him that I do not identify bureaucrat (either in the narrow sense or in the broad sense of a privileged person) with a member of the ruling class. I would include in the ruling class only the upper echelons of the party, state, economic, and military apparatuses; and I would argue that they are drawn from a reasonably homogeneous group with all the essential attributes of a class, including the ability to reproduce itself (through the way they socialize their offspring, through differential access to education, through networks of "connections," even through the formal device of the *nomenklatura**). It is of course true that the factual basis for these statements is not as well documented as one could wish. Officially

* The *nomenklatura* has a double meaning: on the one hand it is a list of high-level posts which can be filled only on the nomination of the party center, and on the other hand it is a list of persons maintained by the party center (mostly but not entirely party members) who can be nominated to fill these posts. Through this device, that segment of the ruling group which is, so to speak, on active duty is wholly self-reproducing and carefully insulated from unwanted pressure from lower-level bureaucrats in the usual meaning of the term, as well as from rank-and-file members of the party.

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controlled societies like the Soviet Union, while not averse to Western-style sociological studies of their middle strata, are extremely secretive when it comes to the top and bottom extremes.* Nevertheless, a fairly clear general picture can be pieced together from various types of evidence (the Soviet press and literature, accounts of dissidents, observations of foreign reporters and visitors), and it unmistakably points to the existence of a deeply class-divided society in which consciousness of the "we-they" division on both sides of the great divide is at least as strong as it is in Western capitalist societies. (Is it necessary to add that the division of society into classes does not preclude, either theoretically or historically, mobility across class lines in both upward and downward directions? In fact, as Marx was at pains to emphasize, the strongest and most dangerous ruling classes are precisely those which best know how to co-opt and integrate into their own ranks the ablest and most vigorous members of the dominated classes.)

The final subject I would like to comment on is the one raised by Mandel in his section III (beginning on p. 70 above). In my opinion, and I think in his opinion too, it is of very great importance. But we do not pose it in the same way, and this tends to make discussion difficult and even confusing. For this reason I think it will be most helpful to quote his words and to counterpose to them my own formulation. According to Mandel:

> The idea that the Soviet bureaucracy (like the trade-union bureaucracy in the West) has not cut its umbilical cord with the working class, and that its specific interests and political decisions can be seen within the framework of that special—parasitic—relationship with the proletariat, leads to the conclusion that the class struggle in the capitalist countries continues to be a bi-polar process: capital versus labor (with the bureaucracy operating by and large as "labor lieutenants of capital").

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* Murray Yanowitch, author of an excellent monograph based on Soviet sociological studies, remarks: "It hardly needs to be said that we will seek in vain for Soviet studies of movement into or out of a 'ruling class,' a 'bureaucratic elite,' a group of 'controllers,' or an 'underclass.'" (*Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union: Six Studies* [White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe Publisher, 1977], p. 104) Occasionally, however, the Soviet satirical journal *Krokodil* casts a sharp beam of light on forbidden subjects: for example, the *New York Times* of March 6, 1978, reproduces a cartoon from *Krokodil* showing an arrogant-looking cigarette-smoking brat being lectured "in the children's room of a militia station." The caption, according to the *Times*, reads: "Hey, take it easy! Don't forget whose son you are talking to!"

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The idea that the Soviet bureaucracy is a new ruling class and the unavoidable conclusion that the Communist parties not in power can be seen—at least so far as their central apparatuses are concerned—as the nucleus of a potential new exploiting class, implies of necessity the complete revision of that way of looking at the whole of twentieth-century history. The class struggle now becomes a tri-polar affair: capital versus labor versus the potential "new exploiting class."

This is not simply a question of modifying historical analysis (which in and of itself would already be hair-raising and, at least so far as the evidence we possess is concerned, an impossible task). It has political implications of the greatest and gravest magnitude.

The trouble with this formulation, I think, is that it assumes the possibility of directly deducing from the analysis of developments in the Soviet Union conclusions applicable to the countries of advanced capitalism. The fact—and I believe it is a fact—that there is a new ruling class in the Soviet Union does not and could not change the class struggle in the West from a bi-polar to a tri-polar affair. The fundamental classes of capitalism are what they have always been, and the primary class struggle remains between capital and labor. The Communist parties not in power are reformist working-class parties, in this respect just like the social democratic parties. Whether the central apparatuses of either or both of these parties might provide the nucleus of a new ruling class *after* a successful revolution would depend on the way the revolution happened and the situation prevailing at that time. If, as now seems likely, that is still a long way in the future, we would do better to assume that the revolution would be led by a party which as of now either doesn't exist or has yet to attract significant working-class support (an assumption which Mandel ought to find to his liking). In that case, this "new" revolutionary party might contribute the nucleus of a new ruling class, or it might lead the struggle against the rise of a new ruling class, or it might (as actually happened in the USSR) be torn apart and transformed by its own participation *on both sides* of this struggle.

The point is that the new ruling class, if it does emerge in the developed capitalist countries (which I am by no means assuming to be inevitable), will take shape in the post-revolutionary situation itself which, whatever else it might be, will certainly not be a repetition of the post-revolutionary situation in Russia. That the new exploitative class develops out of the revolutionary situation is a point which I specially emphasized in my original article, but it is one that Mandel either does not understand or adamantly resists.

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The reason, I suspect, is not because it is in contradiction with the facts of recent history but because it *is* in contradiction with the theory which Trotsky put forward in the 1920s and 1930s, and which still constitutes the heart of the Fourth International's analysis of the contemporary world.

Two points in conclusion:

(1) Mandel holds that if one says there is a new ruling class in the USSR, one must conclude that it is either progressive or reactionary compared to the capitalist class and take one's political position accordingly, lending "critical support" to one or the other. And if one decides that it is progressive compared to the capitalist class, then one must end up by justifying it, "if not becoming a straightforward apologist for all its crimes." But why should one allow oneself to be so hopelessly trapped by a rigid theory? Why not analyze situations concretely, taking account of all relevant considerations and drawing conclusions from the evidence thus obtained? If the Soviet ruling class rigidly represses all independent working-class activity, can't we say that in this respect it is worse than its capitalist counterparts in the West? And if its backing (for its own reasons of course) is essential to the survival of the Cuban Revolution, can't we to that extent lend it critical support without apologizing for its crimes? It seems to me that Mandel's dilemma here is strictly of his own creation.

(2) Mandel, like Trotsky before him, does not believe in the possibility of socialist development except in the advanced capitalist countries, and he expects them (after they have become socialist) to provide the necessary economic and political support to enable not only the Soviet Union but also the entire Third World to embark on the socialist road. This can be either an optimistic or a pessimistic perspective depending on how one rates the chances of a revolution in the West in the foreseeable future. Mandel, being an optimist, rates these chances very high indeed, and even goes so far as to interpret working-class struggles in the West "over the last century or so" as "the proletariat's periodic spontaneous attempts to reconstruct society along socialist lines." (p. 75 above) This reading of the history of the last century seems to me to be a tribute to the human mind's ability to believe what it wants to in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, but to pursue this theme would obviously take us far beyond the scope of a brief commentary. Nor would it serve my present purpose, which is simply to point out that Trotskyism, at least in its Mandelian version, is solidly in the tradition of Western-centered thought which has spawned a rich and variegated offspring, including the renaissance,

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the reformation, the enlightenment, and more recently racism and imperialism. What these have in common is a belief in the unique creativity of Europe and hence the superiority of its civilization. It can be said quite correctly that Marxism is also an offspring of Western-centered thought. But there is this difference that Marxism, especially as Marx himself was shaping it in his later years, had the potential to transcend its European origins and to become a truly universal world outlook.* True, Marxism remained very much a Western-centered movement in the period between Marx's death and the Russian Revolution, a fact which reflected the economic and even more the political realities of the time. But after the October Revolution, as Lenin alone among the great Marxist thinkers of that generation sensed, Marxism increasingly overflowed its European boundaries and reached out to fulfill its universal mission.** And after the Second World War with the victory of the Chinese Revolution and the flowering of Marxist thought not only in Asia but also in Latin America and Africa, Marxism came to full maturity as the revolutionary outlook of the most exploited workers and peasants on a world scale. Simultaneously, and connected with this process in a cause-and-effect relationship, there took place the maturing of capitalism not as a collection of discrete capitalist societies in various stages of development but as a thoroughly integrated global system dominated by the double dialectic of center/periphery and development/underdevelopment.

Not all the implications of these momentous historical developments are visible as yet—far from it. And our ability to analyze and understand them is still at a primitive stage. But I think that one thing at any rate is clear, that Western-centered Marxism, like Western-centered thought in general, is rapidly becoming more of a hindrance than a help in getting on with this vitally important task.

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* In this connection see Kenzo Mohri, "Marx and 'Underdevelopment,'" MONTHLY REVIEW (April 1979).

** Especially significant (and symptomatic) was Lenin's article "Better Fewer, But Better," *Pravda* (March 2, 1923), his last published work before his final disabling stroke.

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THE EVER VANISHING VISION

By Frederick L. Schuman

The following is an excerpt from a copy sent to us of a long letter by Fred Schuman to an old friend. It is published here by permission. Fred Schuman is now retired after a long and distinguished career as a political scientist and analyst of international relations at the University of Chicago, Williams College, other campuses from Harvard to Hawaii during summers and sabbaticals, and Portland (Oregon) State University.—The Editors

From the perspective of mankind's successive civilizations, the divided and contentious One World of our time bears witness to an ancient and recurrent tragedy. The people of our disastrous century are no less victims of conflict between their aspirations and their conduct than those of the calamitous fourteenth century, brilliantly depicted by Barbara Tuchman in *A Distant Mirror* (Knopf, 1978). Men and women of all epochs, or the more sensitive and perceptive among them, have ever striven to unite humanity in service of its highest shared goals—and have ever found wanting their ability or willingness to bring the dream to pass.

The memory of the deceased "World State" of the classical civilization has long led succeeding generations to seek its resurrection, more recently in global rather than regional terms. Western peoples once hoped in vain that unity, peace, and justice could be had through the Universal Church and the Holy Roman Empire. As the old faith faded, new faiths emerged: the aristocratic cult of divinely ordained monarchical absolutism, followed by the

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bourgeois creed of democratic liberalism and its offspring, world federalism—each envisaged by many as the basis of world order and peace on earth. Since the mid-1800s the ostensibly proletarian ideology of Marxism, and then Marxism-Leninism (unique in the speed and spread of its conversions), has renewed the old vision in a new form.

The fate of this contemporary enterprise in human unity has been shaped less by the enmity of victims of "class war" than by internal cleavages and schisms among the faithful. Here, as always, heretics are more hated than infidels. During the First World War Marxists split into "Social Democrats" and "Communists," often coming to blows during the days of our years. The specter of monolithic Communism has waned as Communists in turn have divided, quarreled, persecuted one another, and waged open warfare against other Communists. In planetary terms, the most significant of these breaches is plainly the seemingly irreparable conflict between Moscow and Peking.

Incidentally, in my brief correspondence with a mutual friend of ours, he cited last year as a model of comradely affection the relations between the Albanian and Chinese Marxists. A week later Party leaders in Tirana and Peking severed contacts and began denouncing one another with the invective and insult customary in such matters.

The dissolution of the "Communist bloc" evokes rejoicing among anti-Communists and despair among Marxists. But its sources are too often ignored. In every state system of separate sovereignties, the members inevitably become rivals for power. In their struggles, the imperatives of power politics prevail over whatever restraints of international law, diplomatic courtesy, and common decency may have emerged—as eloquently noted by Hobbes, Dante, Machiavelli, Plutarch, Thucydides, and Herodotus.

All this is powerfully reinforced by the cult of nationalism, bourgeois in origin but now permeating all classes, all peoples, all leaders and followers. Here is the dominant creed of our time. Arnold J. Toynbee called it "a false and maleficent religion," since it feeds upon ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and irredentism, precludes world order, and perpetuates international anarchy. Unwittingly, Communists have ceased to be revolutionary "internationalists" and have become, like everyone else, national patriots, no less addicted to intolerance and fanaticism than non-Communists or anti-Communists.

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Viewed from wider horizons, these phenomena of behavior display the ambiguities and ambivalences of the human psyche with its legacy of anger, fear, and hatred and its deeply rooted passions for murder and suicide, preferably, as in war, "with a good conscience," to use Nietzsche's words. Perhaps HomoSap is capable of love, loyalty, brotherhood, and identification with his fellows only within a context of group against group, nation against nation. If so, there is no ground for supposing that our civilization in our time or that of our children will escape the destiny of its precursors: self-destruction through militarism and war.

Even so, and granting the failure thus far of all efforts to transcend these portents of doom, our duty to the best in our purposes is still to persist, with what wisdom we are granted, in the unending adventure of saving Man from himself—even if our efforts resemble the labors of Sisyphus. Someday, somehow, our endeavor may attain its goal. Meanwhile our lives are rendered more meaningful in the measure of our devotion to the pursuit of the vision.

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MORE ON ALTHUSSER'S MARXISM

By Hugh H. Grady

The review of Louis Althusser's *Essays in Self-Criticism* by James C. Canning and James D. Cockcroft in your January 1979 issue was a parody of a critique, accepting as it does Althusser's major theoretical suppositions without any attempt at perspective or at coming to grips with what Althusser has done to Marxism. Your readers, it seems to me, deserve much more than a review which simply uncritically rehashes the premises which it purports to discuss.

It is of course impossible to undertake a full airing of a counter-position in a brief reply, but I would like to state some propositions in an attempt to at least get them on the record.

At the heart of the matter is Althusser's re-conceptualization of Marxism as a Bachelardian "science" in opposition to what he considers "right-wing" importations of humanism into Marxism. Under this crude and polemic rubric, such diverse theorists as Marcuse, Habermas, Adorno, Sartre, Goldmann, Lefebvre, and Merleau-Ponty are lumped together and dismissed as so much "ideological" garbage.

Hugh Grady is a writer living in Louisville, Kentucky.

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Recording only an astonished gasp at what has been so casually given up in this dismissal, I will simply try to indicate how Marx himself fares in this Althusserian straitjacket. The position that "alienation" is a category of the young Marx completely surpassed in *Capital* founders in the light of that section occurring early in that remarkable work, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," a bit of "mature Marx" at which Althusser has continually found himself embarrassed and which has, along with similar passages, compelled him to acknowledge that a consistently "mature" Marxism is not to be found in its pure form *in any of Marx's mature theoretical writings* (see *Reading Capital* by Althusser and Etienne Balibar). Althusser's forcing of his science/ideology dichotomy onto Marx's dialectical categories actually reproduces the very "sad ideological" split, economism/humanism, which he rightly attributes to the Marxism of the Second International. It was, after all, the Second International theorists who first conceptualized Marxism as a deterministic "science" in need of an external ethical dimension which they imported from Kant. Althusser retains this split, but he attempts to conjure away the resulting ethical lacuna within such a scientistic Marxism by ill-tempered and dogmatic posturing, as if a revolutionary theory which proposes the transformation of all aspects of life were in need of ethics only as a concession to the lack of scientific rigor on the part of the "masses." All that is not "science," according to Althusser, is merely ideology:

> Furthermore, Marx's theoretical anti-humanism, by relating it to its conditions of existence, recognizes a necessity for humanism as an *ideology*, a conditional necessity. The recognition of this necessity is not purely speculative. On it alone can Marxism base a policy in relation to the existing ideological forms, of every kind: religion, ethics, art, philosophy, law—and in the very front rank, humanism.*

It is, of course, the "humanist" element of Marx's mature theoretical categories—humanist in the sense that the values of liberation implicit in his critique are not grounded in a transcendental or divine realm but in the human project of self-creation—that allows him to transcend the positions taken by Althusser and the Second International. Unlike bourgeois social science, value judgments grounded in Marxian humanism are "contained" within the "scientific" categories of *Capital* and the *Grundrisse;* it is

* Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (New York: Vintage, 1970), p. 231.

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this which is the very underpinning of the "proletarian class stand" of these works which is so valued by Althusser, Canning, and Cockcroft. By consigning "value" to an extra-scientific, "ideological" status, Althusser reproduces within the heart of his "Marxism" the main antimony of bourgeois social science, the split between "facts" and "value."

One could go on in this vein, but it is most important to come to the political implications of all this, best got at by reference to Althusser's (and by extension, Canning and Cockcroft's) ambiguous relation to what they refer to as "Stalinism." To make a long story short, I would argue that Althusser's scientistic re-conceptualization of Marxism is best understood as an ideological justification for a Stalinist theory and practice that he has never fully confronted. The practical application of Althusser's science/ideology split means science for the party, ideology for the masses. This means that the dictatorship of the proletariat consists not, as Marx and Engels argued, in free elections, full democratic rights for the working class, and the absolute right of recall of elected delegates, but by the dictatorship of a party "scientifically" representing the working class's "objective" interest—which of course it ultimately determines. In this ideological fantasy-land, the most bizarre "materialist" theses become arguable, as, for example, the proposition of Martin Nicolaus and other interpreters of the Chinese line of the Mao period, that the class nature of the Soviet state was transformed by simply replacing the top man, by Khrushchev's "bourgeois" usurpation of power.

I would also add that it seems obvious that a critique of "Stalinism" should imply a new look at the theories and practice of Lenin, whom Stalin deified and quoted at every turn, and at Mao, for whom Stalin's version of "Marxism-Leninism" was an explicit framework, questioned in part but relied on massively as a political model and as a counter to "Khrushchevite revisionism." In taking up such a long overdue theoretical re-examination of the ideology of socialism as it now exists, the American left, I am confident, will find the Marxist humanism so cavalierly dismissed in Canning and Cockcroft's review a much more powerful and liberating—and, need I add, more Marxian—methodology than Althusser's neo-Stalinist scholasticism.

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(*Continued from inside front cover*)
articles. Essays should be submitted in triplicate with the names and addresses of the authors on separate sheets of paper which will be revealed to the jurors only after they have made their selection(s).

It seems to us that any readers of MR, especially Spanish-speaking or Spanish-learning, could benefit from the Spanish-language edition of the magazine which is put out in Barcelona and is about to start its third year of publication under the title *Revista Mensual/Monthly Review*. Not only does RM/MR contain translations of outstanding articles and reviews from the English edition, it also publishes original material focused on Spain and Latin America written or selected by the comrade editors in Barcelona. A free sample copy of RM/MR is available from *Monthly Review*, 62 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011. Subscriptions (1,000 pesetas in Spain and 1,500 pesetas abroad, airmail, for one year) can be obtained from *Revista Mensual/Monthly Review*, Calle Rosellón 282, entresuelo 1ª, Barcelona 37, Spain.

We are glad to be able to report that Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, by far MR Press's current bestseller, continues to make its way abroad. The latest foreign edition is an English-language one published by Social Scientist Press, Trivandrum, Kerala, India. The price, 35 rupees ($4.40 at the present exchange rate) is considerably lower than the price of imported copies and should make the book accessible to a much wider readership in India than it has hitherto been able to reach.

We have been accumulating for some months now notices and announcements we think will interest a sizable number of MR subscribers (the basis of selection from the *much* larger number of requests to be included in this space is of course somewhat arbitrary: we can only plead that we do our best):

(1) A Latin American collective in Mexico has been publishing for some time now *Cuadernos del Tercer Mondo* (more recently also a Portuguese edition *Cadernos do Terceiro Mundo*) and has now launched an English-language edition entitled *Third World*, an illustrated and popularly written report on developments in the underdeveloped countries. Our old friend and translator of a number of MR Press books from Spanish, Cedric Belfrage, is a consulting editor of *Third World*. For further information and a free introductory sample copy of *Third World* (regular sub price is $12 for five and $22 for ten issues), write to *Third World*, Apdo. 20-572, Mexico 20 D.F., Mexico.

(2) The Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) has issued a carefully researched 70-page pamphlet entitled *Women Under Attack: Abortion, Sterilization Abuse, and Reproductive Freedom* which analyzes the history, legal status, and political struggles around reproductive freedom. The price is $2.50 a copy ($2 on orders of ten or more), and CARASA's address is P.O. Box 124, Cathedral Station, New York, N.Y. 10025.

(3) The Institute for the Study of Labor and Economic Crisis has published a report entitled *Workers' Report on the Conditions of Labor and Their Effect on Patient Care at San Francisco General Hospital* (compiled and written by the Institute with the assistance of the Workers Committee to Improve Hospital Services and Rebel Worker Organization). The report draws on the pioneering work of Harry Braverman in *Labor and Monopoly Capital* and applies his ideas to an analysis of an important part of the services sector. For further information about the report and related work, write to the Institute, 131 Townsend St., San Francisco, Calif. 94107.

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Big Steel: Black Politics and Corporate Power in Gary, Indiana by Edward H. Greer. This book is an analysis of the limits of reform in our political economy based on the author's experience as special assistant to Gary, Indiana's mayor with responsibility for reorganizing municipal departments and coordinating relations with U.S. Steel. CL4906 $16.50/£9·00

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